The UNESCO COURIER

MAY 1992

REDISCOVERING 1492

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E N C O U N T E R S

We invite readers to send us photographs to be considered for publication in this feature. Your photo should show a painting, a sculpture, piece of architecture or any other subject which seems to be an example of cross-fertilization between cultures. Alternatively, you could send us pictures of two works from different cultural backgrounds in which you see some striking connection or resemblance. Please add a short caption to all photographs.

East-West Encounter

1990, mixed media on canvas and wood (200 x 125 cm) by Ismaël Kachtihi

Ismaël Kachtihi is a French artist of Moroccan origin. A critic has written of him and his work as the meeting of "the Atlantic and the Mediterranean, the High Atlas and the Sierra Nevada; Córdoba, Bordeaux, Paris, Casablanca and Tangiers; the Jewish, Muslim and Christian souls; Berber, Arab, Andalusian and French song."

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Chamuco (1990), mixed media by the Mexican artist Mari Carmen Hernández Brossollet, on a fabric of interlaced ribbons inspired by an ancient Aztec tradition.
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Manco Cápac, son of the Sun and founder of the Inca dynasty (detail). Oil on canvas, Cuzco school, Peru, 18th century.

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UNESCO IN ACTION

The UNESCO COURIER
45th year — Published monthly in 37 languages and in Braille

"The Governments of the States parties to this Constitution on behalf of their peoples declare,
"that since wars begin in the minds of men, it is in the minds of men that the defences of peace must be constructed . . .
"that a peace based exclusively upon the political and economic arrangements of governments would not be a peace which could secure the unanimous, lasting and sincere support of the peoples of the world, and that the peace must therefore be founded, if it is not to fail, upon the intellectual and moral solidarity of mankind.
"For these reasons, the States parties . . . are agreed and determined to develop and to increase the means of communication between their peoples and to employ these means for the purposes of mutual understanding and a truer and more perfect knowledge of each other's lives. . . ."

EXTRACT FROM THE PREAMBLE TO THE CONSTITUTION OF UNESCO, LONDON, 16 NOVEMBER 1945

REDISCOVERING

THE year 1492, whose fifth centenary we are now commemorating, marked the beginning of a sequence of events in which all the peoples of the world came to know and relate to one another. It was a year in which a number of portents signalled the coming of the modern age. History, hitherto fragmented, would come to be universal, and the human condition would be seen as one and the same everywhere and as transcending the differences between cultures and civilizations. From that year onwards, man, now *par excellence* "historical man", would be identified with the "essential man" sought by thinkers and philosophers ever since Classical Antiquity.

A variety of myths, presentiments and irresistible scientific imperatives all led inevitably to the day, 12 October 1492, when the two hemispheres linked their destinies across the *"Mare tenebrosum"* which filled mariners with such dread but whose secrets cosmographers and poets had long guessed at. The two halves of the Earth were joined together and by discovering others man began to discover himself. This first encounter was to be followed by countless others, whose successive reactions would lead peoples and nations into a pattern of change and growing interdependence that is still developing today.

With every day that goes by, such encounters continue and multiply: encounters between emigrants and those who welcome them; between haves and have-nots; between those who walk the paths of knowledge and those who cannot find their way. We now live on a planet in whose future we are all involved, whether we like it or not. We are all aboard the same spaceship Earth, and we must keep it on a steady course if we do not want it to founder. More than ever before, the world is all of one piece. . . .

We should speak frankly about the major global challenges—social, cultural and ecological—which all human beings, whatever the colour of their skin, whatever their language, must face on the eve of the third millennium.

None of us can be indifferent to the commemoration of the fifth centenary of the encounter between two worlds. Arguments over the nature of the event—whether it was a discovery, a clash of cultures, an encounter, or a missed opportunity—add fuel to a controversy that is not only semantic but reflects a concern to make a just assessment of the past and, above all, to adopt an imaginative approach to the future from a present whose astonishing diversity is expressed in American culture—its art, literature and music.

It is for the sake of the future that reflection on the American past should dwell on the courageous and honourable aspects of all those who lived through the events—both violent and peaceful—of these five centuries. No useful purpose would be served by passing retroactive judgement on them, by lamenting bygone days or deeds that cannot be undone. History must be accepted in its totality, with its areas of darkness and light, so that the wounds inflicted in its most terrible episodes may heal as quickly as possible.

The past is ever-present in the forty million indigenous people who have kept alive their ethnic, cultural and linguistic identity in the continent's archaeological heritage, in national emblems and symbols, artistic signs and representations, architecture and textile design, musical rhythms, traditions and customs and varied culinary practices. This legacy is not only part of the American identity and the sense of nationhood of each people, it contributes to the diversity of the human heritage as a whole.

The greatness and posterity of Indian America do not lie in withdrawal and isolation, but in the fraternal coexistence of the American peoples in a spirit of unity that at the same time guarantees diversity. Culture, like love, can only grow when it is shared. Mestizo America, shining like a beacon with a myriad different facets, bears striking witness to the truth of this process of creation and re-creation.

The intermingling of cultures can be seen in the Ibero-American landscape, in cities like Cuzco, where the achievements of Inca, Spanish and republican art all meet; in the superimposed styles and influences that can be seen in the "Square of Three Cultures" in Mexico City, in the syncretic religious practices of Chichicastenango in Guatemala, in the beauty of the Baroque architecture of Ouro Preto and Chiquitos, and in the outstanding writings of the Inca Garcilaso or Felipe Guamán Poma de Ayala.

The uniqueness of America stems from the intermingling of all the peoples—whether they be indigenous, Iberian, African, European,

1492

By Federico Mayor

Director-General of Unesco

Arab or Asian—that have made the continent what it is. It is the product of those who were there, of those who came from outside—whether by chance, attracted by ambition or hope, or brought against their will, and of those who were born in the New World, the children of history.

Thus, racial and cultural intermingling became the mainspring of integration and enrichment; of converging creative energies and novel insights into the human condition; of the disinterested sense of abnegation displayed in defending a faith; of multifarious relations between cultures marked by confrontations, resistance, assimilation, learning and borrowing. José de Vasconcelos wrote in *La Raza cósmica* that "the calling of the Ibero-American race" was primarily to become the melting-pot in which "all cultures will merge into one".

America is a melting-pot which can be seen to prefigure the only possible future for the rest of the world—a future in which human beings from different cultural backgrounds will live side by side in peace and join their voices in unison, mixing and intermingling to weave the complex fabric of the human future.

Telecommunications have made it possible to reveal to the world the complex events of our time as and when they happen. Spanish and Portuguese, the common languages of Iberian America, possess qualities that are particularly suited to communication and have made a signal contribution to this miracle. Some people have spoken of the "imperial" power of language, as did Antonio de Nebrija when he claimed before Queen Isabella of Castile that his Grammar of the Spanish language would make it possible to "conquer a world". But Latin America has long since been spared the rule of metropolitan powers which imposed their language on it. It is today a place where language is being reshaped as a medium of expression, and an arena of international communication that is open to the great events of history.

Thanks to the Iberian vehicular languages, the Latin American countries are now claiming and upholding their own ethnic and linguistic heritage, both among themselves and in the eyes of the world. Their voices are blending in the complex harmonies of contemporary culture, especially in literature. "A writer's homeland is his language", said Francisco Ayala in *El escritor de la lengua española*. Only a common language can prove effective in building "a great homeland", while at the same time contending with the challenges of the modern age.

Simón Bolívar wrote that "Education is the foundation stone of freedom". Bolívar dreamt of a united Latin America, but his dream could not come true without the connecting thread of language and intellect or without respect and support for the original cultures. It was a dream that was dashed by more than one hundred and fifty years of discord and is only now being revived through political determination to move towards the unity of the continent. The establishment of free trade areas and regional common markets, together with co-operation in education and science, mark the starting-point for a series of developments which found political expression at the First Ibero-American Summit Meeting held in Guadalajara, in Mexico, on 18 and 19 July 1991.

On that occasion, the Heads of State of the countries of the Region and of Spain and Portugal embarked on a process of economic, educational and scientific co-operation, to be followed up in the cultural field by measures designed to ensure the free circulation of goods and services, while situating the problems of Latin America in the world context and taking action to deal with the many world problems, notably those concerning the environment, that lend themselves to national solutions.

In all these areas, courage and determination are needed to correct inequalities. Although we may speak of the moral debt owed to Latin America by the more advanced countries, we must also stress the "internal social debt" of those countries where economic and social differentials condemn vast sectors of the population to extreme poverty. Courage and imagination are needed to create "new models" that will be capable of erasing the bitter memories of the past and the inequalities of the present and of paving the way for a brighter future.

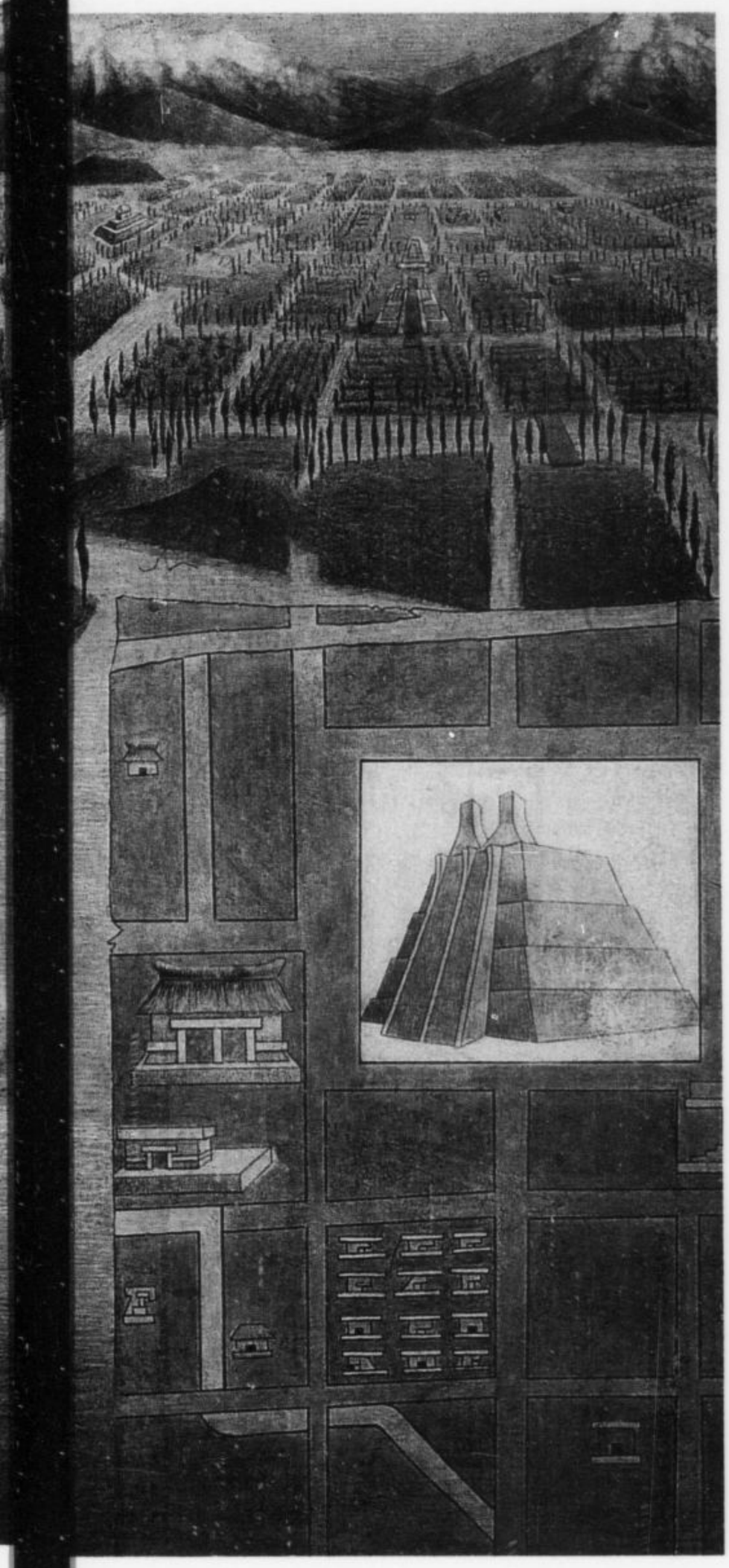
This common task faces not only Latin America but humanity as a whole. Accepting this challenge is the best way of commemorating 1492—the anniversary of an encounter not only between two worlds but between modern man and his universal destiny, in other words with himself. ❐

Portrait of a continent

BY MIGUEL LEÓN-PORTILLA

"NAKED as the day they were born. . . . Handsome men with well-proportioned bodies and fine faces, hair almost as thick as a horse's mane and cut short. . . . Neither white nor black." This was how Christopher Columbus described in the log of his first voyage the indigenous people who came to meet him on the island of Guanahaní, which he christened San Salvador. Convinced that he was near the Indies, he called them simply "Indians".

The inhabitants of these islands, and of larger neighbouring ones such as Haïti, Cuba, Jamaica and Puerto Rico, were Arawaks, while the Lesser Antilles were peopled with Caribs. These "Indians" and their counterparts in the Paria region of Venezuela and Darién in Panama engaged in hunting, gathering and agriculture, and lived in small villages of mud huts



Left,
a fresco in the Museum of Mexico City depicting *chinampas*, gardens made by the Aztecs on floating rafts of earth and mud dredged from swamps and lakes. This type of pre-hispanic agriculture is still practised in parts of Mexico.
Below, growing tubers as depicted in a 16th-century manuscript, the Codex Florentino.

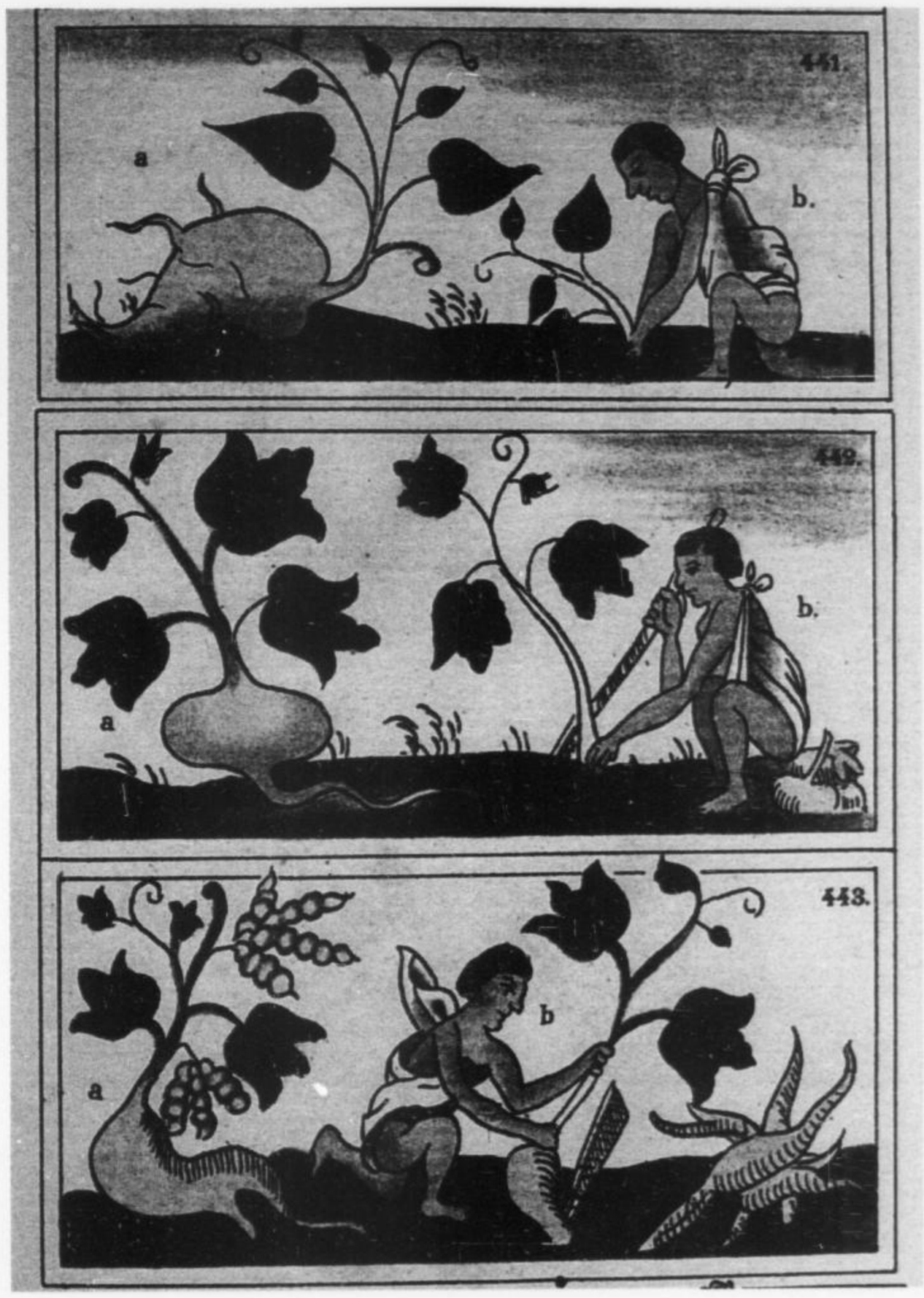
with roofs made of branches. The Spaniards quickly learned that they belonged to "tribes" and obeyed one or several chiefs.

There were other surprises in store for the Europeans in their encounters with the peoples of this extraordinary continent. Columbus himself on his third voyage was told of Mayan merchants who travelled by boat along the Honduran coast. An even more impressive spectacle awaited the shipwrecked sailors who were washed ashore on the Yucatán peninsula in 1511, and the navigator Juan de Grijalva when he landed on the same coast in 1518 and saw "a settlement that seemed at least as big as Seville, with houses of stone, towers and a large square. . . ." This was the Spaniards' first contact with one of the Mayan cities of Meso-America, a region encompassing all of central America and part of Mexico.

CEMANAHUAC: A LAND BETWEEN TWO OCEANS

Meso-America, or Cemanáhuac, was the cradle of a civilization which for thousands of years had boasted great cities richly endowed with palaces, temples and monuments, paintings and inscriptions, and schools where books were written on figtree bark or deerskin treated in the manner of parchment. Besides the great cities, several states flourished in this region of more than two million square kilometres. Each one was virtually an empire in itself with its own political, economic and religious centres.

In 1492, the Mexicas or Aztecs, heirs to the Toltecs, governed the region from their capital, Tenochtitlán, which stood on the site of what later became Mexico City and was even then one of the world's greatest cities. Their ruler Ahuítzotl, the predecessor of Montezuma, held sway over a realm stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific and from the Pánuco Basin to Guatemala. A network of trade routes linked the high plateaux of central Mexico with the Mayan territories, reaching as far as the most remote northern districts of the empire, in what is now the southwestern United States.



The art of working with feathers. An illustration from the *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España (General History of the Things of New Spain)* an encyclopaedia of Aztec culture compiled by the 16th-century Spanish Franciscan Fray Bernadino de Sahagún.

The power and culture of the Aztec empire extended over much of the continent. A variety of languages were spoken within it, including Náhuatl, Otomí, Huastec, Tlapanec, Totonac, Mixtec and Zapotec. The Meso-Americans were remarkable agriculturalists. Their ancestors had domesticated maize almost 7,000 years earlier and had acclimatized it to almost all the region. But maize was by no means their only gift to the world. From Meso-America and the Caribbean also came cocoa, groundnuts, cassava root, tomatoes, red peppers, tobacco, various kinds of squashes, haricot beans and cotton, as well as such fruit varieties as watermelon, papaya, avocado, guava, mammee apple (or Saint Domingo apricot), soursop, chayote and prickly pear, not to mention a large number of medicinal plants. Their domestic animals included a species of hairless dog and they also reared the turkeys which, along with the *cuetlaxóchitl*, or poinsettia, grace the tables of the year-end festive season in many parts of the world.

To the north of the Aztec lands, many other groups lived in mountainous areas, on the great plains, close to rivers and lakes, or on the coasts of the two oceans. These "Indians" were fewer in number than in the southern part of the continent and had managed to adapt to every kind of climate, from the frozen wastes of what are now Canada and Alaska to the torrid deserts of California and Arizona and the Sonoran desert. Today's Inuit (Eskimos), Athapascans, Iroquois, Algonquins, Sioux, Navajo and Papago are all descended from these peoples, who from the closing years of the fifteenth century had to contend with the inroads made by the Spanish, and subsequently by the English, French and Dutch.

In South America there were many other groups including tribes which lived in small villages in the vast forests of the Orinoco, Amazon and Paraná basins. The civilization of the Incas, which rivalled that of the Aztecs and also drew on a tradition dating back thousands of years, had developed in the foothills of the Andes and along the Pacific coast.

TAWANTINSUYO: THE REALM OF THE FOUR PARTS

From 1493 Huayna Cápac ruled over the Inca empire, which was known to the Incas themselves as Tawantinsuyo, the Realm of the Four Parts, and stretched from the south of present-day Colombia to northern Argentina and Chile, taking in a large part of Ecuador, Peru and Bolivia. This vast area was studded with towns and villages, temples and palaces, and countless monuments. The seat of Inca power was the splendid city of Cuzco, almost 4,000 metres up in the Andes.

The roads criss-crossing the empire, from the Chibcha lands in present-day Colombia in the north to the territory of the Araucanians in Chile at its southern extremity, were used by the Incas for their intensive trading system. In the Andes region, various animals belonging to the camel family, such as llamas, alpacas and vicunas, had been domesticated to serve as beasts of burden and for their wool. Among the loads they carried were potatoes, the Andean peoples' great gift to the rest of the world. Other products cultivated in the region that would also later become widely known included quinine, a remedy for fevers, and the coca shrub, whose leaves, when chewed, provide a powerful stimulant and can also be used to make cocaine, a pain-killer, which drug traffickers, unlike the Incas, have since turned into a source of ill-gotten gain.

The Andean cultures boasted remarkable craftsmen who created unique alloys like *tumbaga*, which combined silver, gold and copper. The works of decorative and sacred art they produced over the centuries commanded the admiration and provoked the greed of Europeans. Their metalworking techniques spread as far as Central America and Mexico. Some of those, like the painter Albrecht Dürer, who saw

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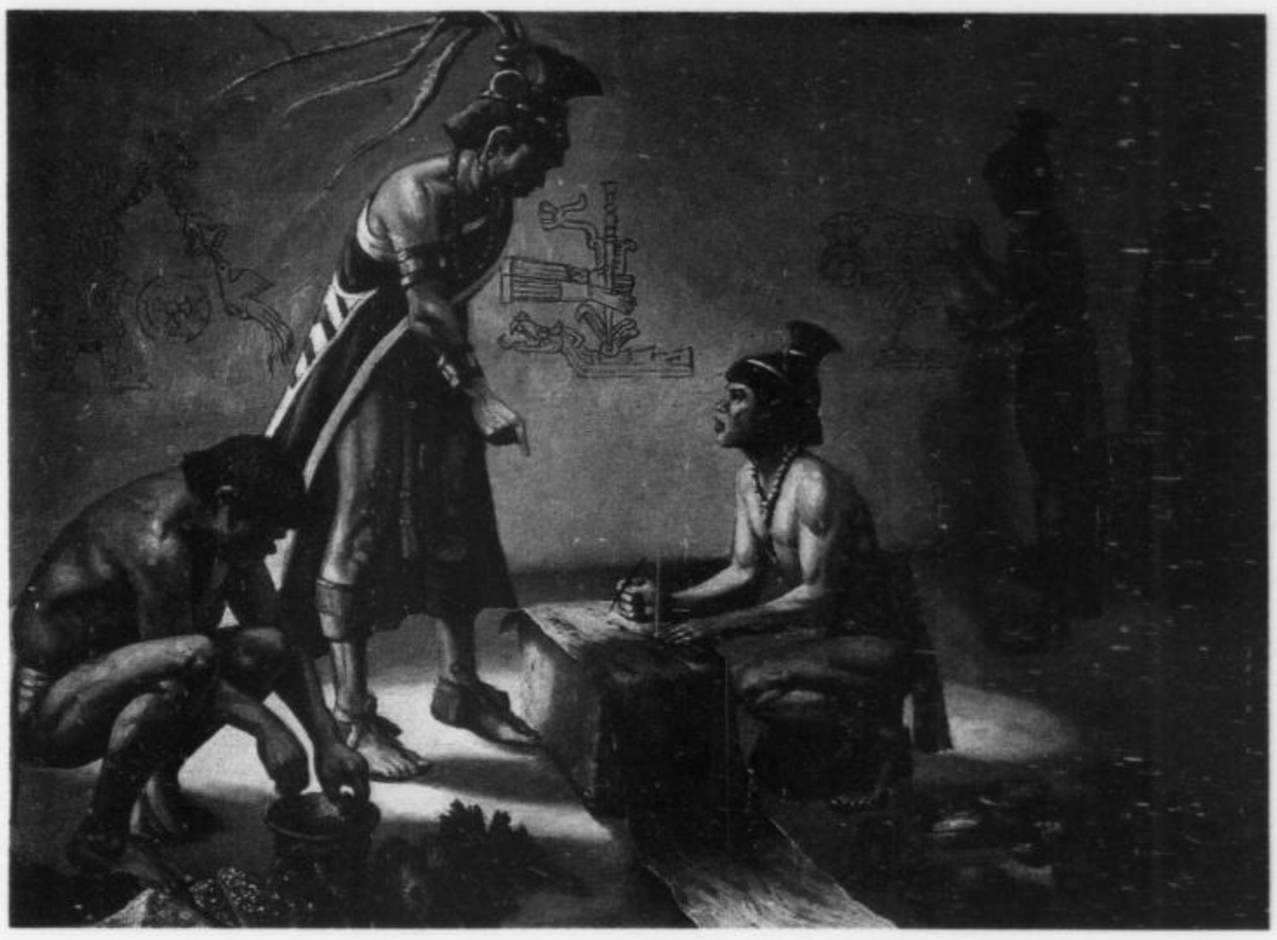
the "golden Sun and silver Moon" sent by Cortés to the Emperor Charles V thought them the most remarkable objects they had ever set eyes on.

THE ENDURING HERITAGE OF THE AMERINDIANS

The Aztecs, Maya, Zapotecs and other Meso-Americans, like the Incas and Aymaras of the Andes, were the heirs of highly developed and ancient civilizations whose cultural influence extended over the greater part of the continent. They all had a number of features in common. They were deeply religious. They shared the same love of the soil, which they saw as symbolizing motherhood, and worshipped the Sun as the source of all life and as a paternal symbol radiating light and warmth. They respected old people, whom they regarded as the repositories of time-honoured wisdom. Their myths, stories, festivals, songs and music show how spirits and the supernatural were part of their daily lives. They strove to live in perfect harmony with nature and all its creatures, whether plants, animals, mountains and rivers, lakes or the sea.

It is not known exactly how many they were when the two worlds came into contact in 1492. A figure of 100 million indigenous inhabitants of the Americas has been advanced, but some people think this is far too high. What is certain is that the culture shock and the spread of previously unknown diseases subsequently decimated the Amerindian population. But they were by no means wiped out, and their descendants are still fighting vigorously to keep their cultures and languages alive. Today, 500 years later, forty million people of Amerindian descent are living evidence of the force of their creativity, their tenacity and their courage. ❐



Aztec painters and colourists are shown at work in this modern fresco in the Museum of Mexico City.

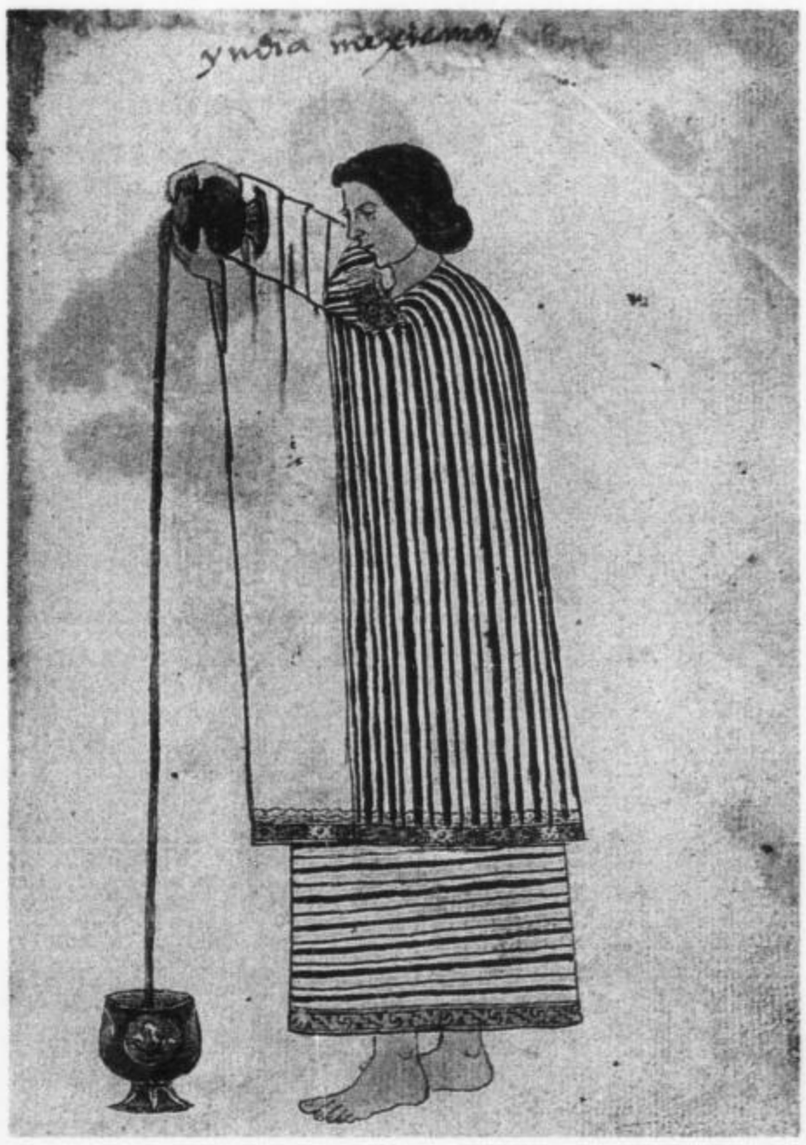


Illustration from the Codex Tudela (1553) showing an Aztec woman preparing chocolate.

We, peoples of America...

To mark the Fifth Centenary of the Meeting of Two Worlds, UNESCO has organized a number of meetings for representatives of the indigenous peoples of America. People of Amerindian descent who met in June 1991 at San Cristóbal de Las Casas, where Bartolomé de Las Casas, the "Apostle of the Indies", once exercised his ministry, adopted the following declaration:

"Fully conscious of the fact that we share a common destiny, we know that the future of our peoples depends on our ability to create an America based on solidarity, and that the America of our dreams is Indian and will remain so, for the original peoples of the continent are at the very heart of its identity.

"We are the heirs to civilizations which flourished on the highland plateaux and in the tropical regions of our continent and have continued to contribute to the enriching of its culture.

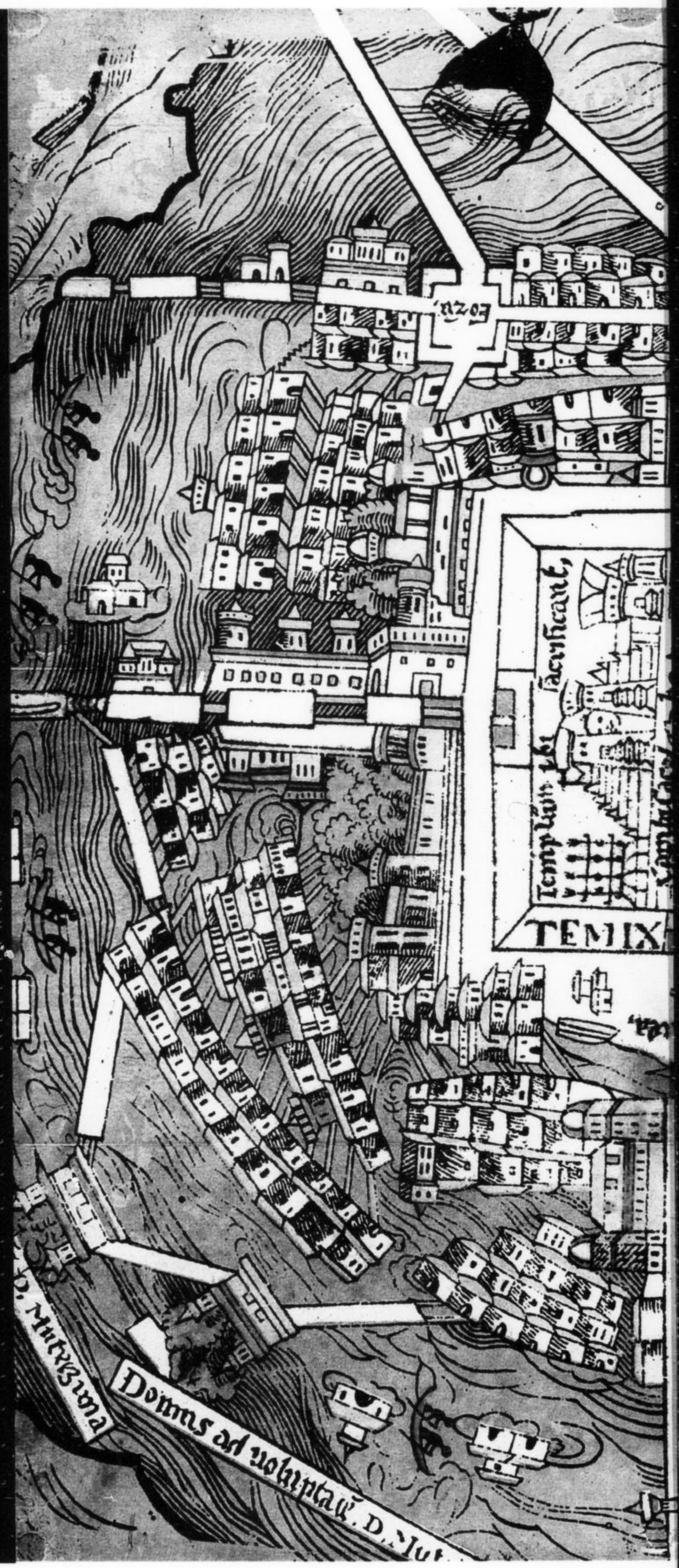
"We assert the enduring strength and vitality of Indian identity, as borne out by the increasing extent to which it is taken into account in drawing up national projects. . . . We invite the leaders of our countries to heed the many voices crying out for dignity, justice and solidarity for all the peoples of the continent".

At their Summit meeting held in Guadalajara, Mexico, on 19 July of the same year, the Presidents and Heads of State of all the Ibero-American countries made the following declaration:

"We recognize the enormous contribution the indigenous peoples have made to the development and pluralism of our societies, and we reiterate our commitment to their economic and social well-being and our obligation to respect their rights and cultural identities".

The genesis of a discovery

Above, gold mask of the Tiahuanaco culture (Bolivia, 200 BC-1200 AD). Right, a plan of Tenochtitlán (Mexico City). It is thought to have been drawn by Hernán Cortés and accompanied a letter he wrote to the Emperor Charles V (16th-century engraving).



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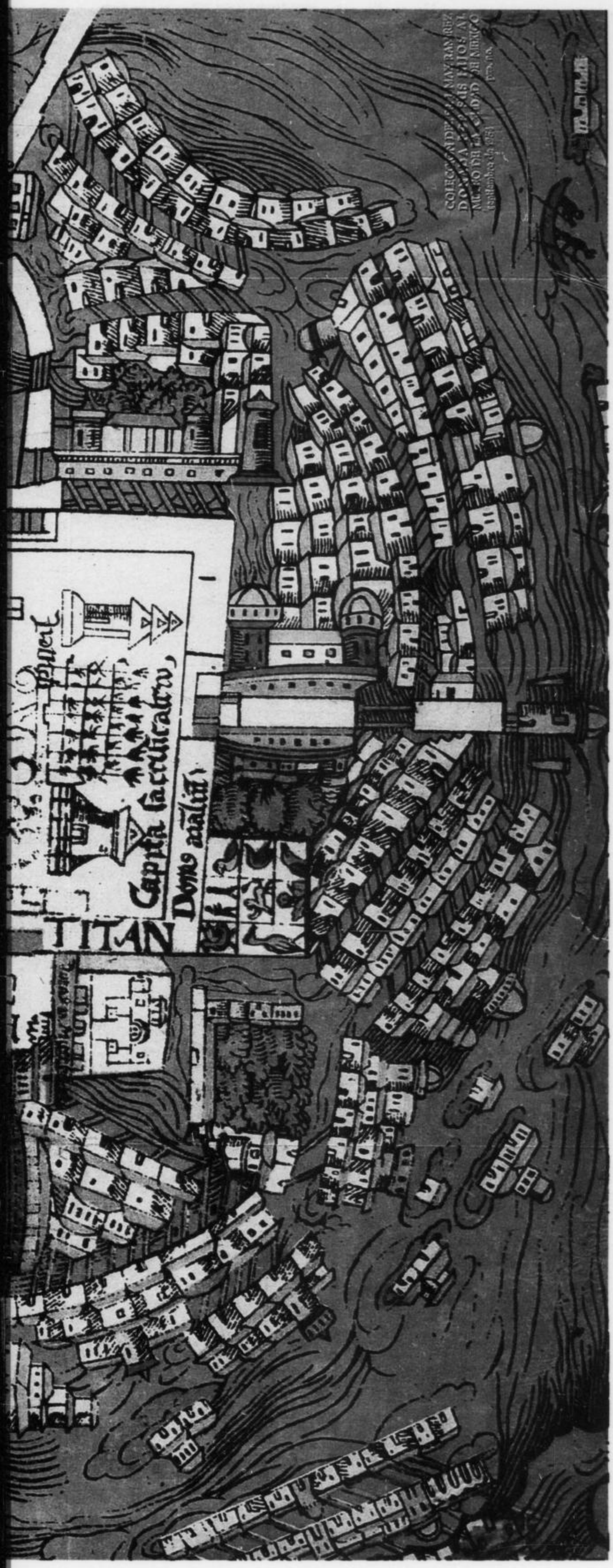


PROPHECIES AND PRESENTIMENTS

BY FERNANDO AINSA

What Columbus found in the New World seemed to embody many old European myths and dreams

THE fact that Christopher Columbus stumbled by chance upon the vast continent of America whilst en route for Cathay (China), Cipango (Japan) and the East has given rise to a great deal of speculation. This is not so much because of the chance nature of his discovery—attempting to reach the East by sailing westward was a bold venture in itself—but because it took Columbus himself several years to realize that he had indeed discovered a New World.

The truth of the matter is that nothing in his training and experience as a sailor and none of the accumulated knowledge of the cartographers and cosmographers of his day could have given him an inkling that the Atlantic Ocean concealed in its grey expanses a continent extending virtually from the Arctic to the Antarctic. The Spaniards, and Europeans in general, were quite unprepared for such an incredible discovery. As Francisco López de Gómara declared in his *Historia General de las Indias* ("General History of the Indies", 1516), "The greatest event since the creation of the world, with the exception of the incarnation and death of its Creator, has been the discovery of the Indies, which is why we call them the New World. . . . It can also be called 'New' because it differs from our own in every respect."

A SEED-BED OF IMAGERY

Finding an explanation for all these "different" things called for a great effort of imagination based on the accumulated knowledge of the day. In an attempt to digest and assimilate all these novelties, explorers, historians and chroniclers turned for guidance to notions that

could be found in the Western world's own scientific and historical past.

What they discovered in the New World seemed to them to hark back to the most distant well-springs of human memory—the Garden of Eden of the Book of Genesis, the Golden Age of ancient mythology, the Lost Tribes of Israel, the rustic Arcadian paradise of the classical era as seen through Renaissance eyes, the Land of Cockayne and medieval variants on the theme of the earthly paradise—fabulous countries peopled with animals and fantastic creatures, with Amazons, giants and headless monsters. In the New World the Old World found its own origins and echoes of happy times of which it had nostalgic memories. Far from discovering a new reality, the Western world was returning, via the West, to its own oriental origins.

During the years that followed the "encounter", the chroniclers and others who accompanied the conquistadors set to work to authenticate their own myths as seen through the American prism. "The Spanish," wrote Claude Lévi-Strauss, "set out less to acquire new knowledge than to authenticate ancient legends—the prophecies of the Old Testament, Graeco-Roman legends such as those of Atlantis and the Amazons, medieval legends such as those of the kingdom of Prester John and the Fountain of Youth."

There was, however, much more to it than this. More than simply a setting for the verification of ancient myths, once it had become incorporated into the imaginary universe of the West, America became, to use the Cuban poet José Lezama Lima's happy phrase, a new "seed-bed of imagery".

In America this surge of unbridled imagination triggered a process of association and, at the same time, of recognition of those real differences that existed. This left the chroniclers of the day free to transpose tales of chivalry to the American landscape whilst still turning to the old bestiaries, fables and treatises on plants with magical powers for the flora and fauna with which they adorned it. Imagination forged a link between the known and the new and unknown. "Countless and eternal are the Americas of the imagination", wrote the Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar Pietri when discussing the myth of Eldorado.

When Bernal Díaz del Castillo arrived at Tenochtitlán with Hernán Cortés and first caught sight of the white edifices of the Aztec capital rising from a flower-strewn lake, he declared that he might have been looking upon the wonders recounted in the chivalric romance *Amadís de Gaula*. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo affirmed that the Antilles, where Columbus made landfall, were the Isles of the Hesperides, the sanctuary of the Golden Age and the birthplace of humankind, which the ancient Greeks thought were located at the western edge of the world, a forty-day sail from the Gorgon Isles (the Cape Verde Islands).

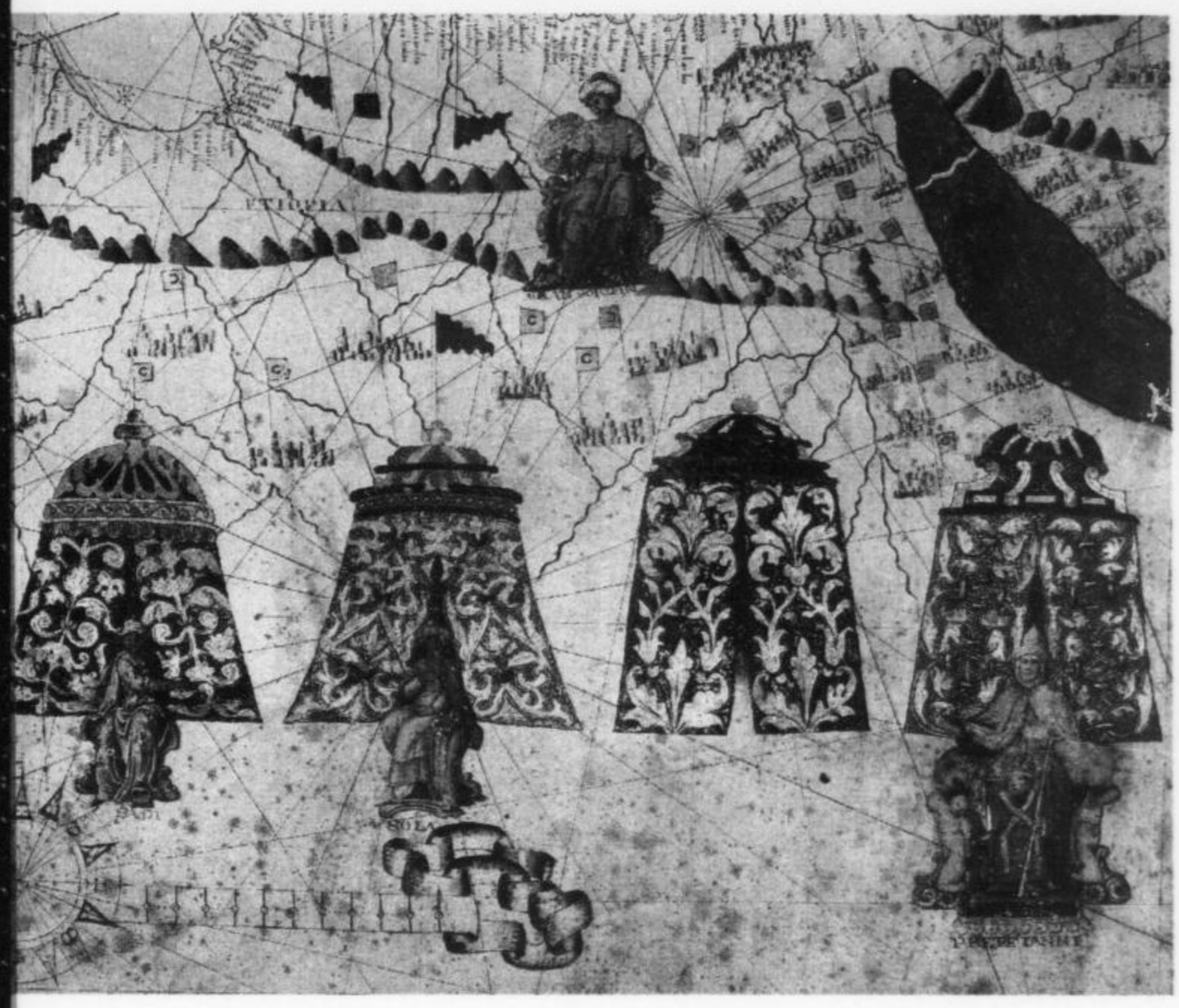
It was not simply the urgent need to explain the novelties of a strange new world that induced the transposition to it of European cosmogonies. The heavy symbolic weight of prophecies and presages also turned Western eyes towards the vast unexplored space extending westward from the Straits of Gibraltar, the *non plus ultra* of the Roman Empire marked by the pillars of Hercules.

OTHER PEOPLES, OTHER WORLDS

Indications of the existence of a "fourth region of the world"—in addition to the three regions of Europe, Asia and Africa that were already known to Antiquity—have been noted some 2,000 years before the discovery of America. In the Egypt of the Pharaohs, the "Kingdom of the Dead" was believed to be situated in the "Land of the Setting Sun" and there were references to it in the legends and travellers' tales of medieval poets and navigators and in the speculations of astronomers and cartographers. Columbus himself referred to them in his *Book of Prophecies* (1501) in which he declared that he had found this famous "fourth region of the world", this site of the earthly paradise, long sought by the early Church Fathers.

One of the earliest allusions to lands peopled

A late 18th-century Spanish engraving depicting an Indian from the Orinoco river.



The mythical kingdom of Prester John, which Renaissance geographers identified with Ethiopia, is shown in this detail from a map drawn in 1563.

by beings "different from us" is to be found in Plato's *Phaedo*. "I am convinced," Plato wrote, "that the world is immense and that we occupy only a small part of it. There can be no doubt that, on the surface of the Earth, there are many other peoples living in lands similar to our own." In his dialogues *Timaeus* and *Critias*, he writes of an island [Atlantis] "larger than Libya and Asia combined", situated beyond the Mediterranean, and of whose existence there had been traces since the time of Solon. The mighty people who lived there had continually sought to extend their sway, until they had been defeated by Athens. Many years after this defeat, the island of Atlantis had disappeared, abruptly engulfed by the sea. This was why, Plato explained, the ocean remained impenetrable and unexplored, since the shallow sedimentary remains of the submerged island made navigation there impossible. In the middle of the sixteenth century, this forgotten myth resurfaced again in Pedro Sarmiento de Gamboa's *Historia de los Incas* ("History of the Incas"). This book propounded all kinds of argument to prove that the empire of Peru was the remnant of the civilization of Atlantis which, following a catastrophic earthquake, unrecorded until the discovery of America, had survived in the high Andes.

Other speculations about the existence of the American continent, whilst claiming a historical basis, were in fact of mythological origin. In his epic *Works and Days*, the Greek poet Hesiod recounts that "Zeus had established a divine race of heroes, whom we call demi-gods, in a distant corner of the Earth, where they live an untroubled, carefree existence" on islands where "the fertile soil brings forth a fine abundant harvest three times a year". Other classical texts evoke the Isles of the Blest, the Hesperides, where the trees bear apples of gold. Sometimes these islands are depicted as immense and continental in size.

In his *Epodes*, the Roman poet Horace declared that true patriots should leave Rome, then a prey to internal strife and civil wars. Though the Golden Age could not be revived in a Roman empire given over to the Iron Age, there were other places where a pristine innocence still reigned, and it was in one of them that the new Rome should be built. As later essayists and philosophers were to maintain, the lands reserved by the Creator from the beginning of time for the "pious people" of whom Horace spoke could be the American continent.

A PROPHECY FULFILLED

According to Graeco-Latin tradition, the Phoenicians were the first to explore the Atlantic, setting off from the trading-post they had established at Gades (Cadiz). In his *Bibliotheca Historica*, a jumble of fabrication and authentic travellers' accounts, Diodorus of Sicily refers to the Phoenicians as the discoverers of a world "which is said to be the dwelling-place of gods rather than of men".

Arab historians also refer to the Phoenician presence in the Atlantic. The geographer Al-Idrisi describes six huge statues erected by the merchants of Sidon and Gades at strategic points in the Azores and the Canaries, all facing towards some unknown destination to the west and seeming to urge men on to further voyages of exploration.

These prophetic legends were later repeated about the Carthaginians, the heirs of Phoenician civilization. The most astounding of these legends relates that the Carthaginians had a plan, should war come, to evacuate the inhabitants of Carthage to an island in the Atlantic where, according to Diodorus, they would find refuge should Carthage suffer defeat.

The *Mirabilis Auscultationes*, a book of wonders attributed to Aristotle, contains an account of an amazing voyage made by merchants to the lands of the setting Sun. "It is said that in the sea which stretches beyond the Pillars of Hercules, the Carthaginians discovered an island, now deserted, where forests and navigable rivers abound, which is rich in fruits of all kinds and which is several days' sailing distance from the continent." Significantly, similar descriptions are to be found in many chronicles and accounts of the discovery of the New World. Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, for example, speaks of merchants who, in their journeyings, found a rich and "very large island never before seen and on which nobody lived".

Montaigne also evoked the legendary land found by the Carthaginians in his essay *Des Cannibales* ("On Cannibals"), in which he gives an allegorical account of how some Carthaginian seafarers who had ventured beyond the Straits of Gibraltar came across an island far from the mainland, covered in forests and watered by great, deep rivers. They had emigrated to this place with their wives and children

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and, captivated by the fertility of the land, they became so used to their new life that they forgot their European origins, and thus rediscovered the happiness they had lost.

No text, however, more clearly foretells the discovery of America than the end of the second act of Seneca's *Medea*, in which the chorus announces that: "In a number of years, the time will come when the ocean will open its barriers and a vast land will be discovered. Thetis will unveil a new world and Thule will no longer be the last outpost of dry land."

Although a purely literary work, Seneca's play, written during the first century AD, seems to have been one of the supports on which medieval and Renaissance cosmographers, cartographers and navigators based their theories. Strabo and such fifteenth-century sages as the Toscanelli of Florence and the German Benhaim maintained that they had taken the prophetic words of the chorus of the *Medea* into account when elaborating the geographical aspects of their projects for sailing to the west.

Seneca's poetic prophecy was to have important political consequences. Columbus died an almost forgotten man, known merely as a seafarer who had come by chance across a new world while sailing westward. Thanks, however, to Seneca's prophetic writing, Columbus was to recover the credit for a discovery that history seemed to have snatched from him. His son Hernando wrote these words in the margin of his copy of the *Medea*: "This prophecy was fulfilled by my father, Admiral Christopher Columbus, in the year 1492."

Later, historians as Francisco López de Gómara, Gonzalo Fernández de Oviedo, Bartolomé de las Casas and Hernando Columbus himself searched among the authors of the past for those whose literary or quasi-scientific writings foretell the existence of a "fourth region of the world". Each of them added his word to the chorus that gave Columbus the credit he deserves for the events of the twelfth of October 1492—Aristotle, Strabo, Pliny, Marco Polo, Sir John Mandeville, Isidore of Seville—all authors that the discoverer of America had himself carefully enumerated in his *Book of Prophecies.*

These prophecies and presages have been so long and so firmly present in the European imagination that it may well be asked, in the words of the Mexican essayist Alfonso Reyes, whether America was not "a region longed for before it was found", since "searched for in every direction, America was both a scientific and a poetic intuition before it became a verified fact". The discovery of America, then, was not, as has been claimed, a matter of chance. So many myths and legends accompanied Columbus on his voyage to the west that it must already have been inscribed in the book of history, with Columbus merely turning it into accomplished fact. As the Mexican philosopher Leopoldo Zea has written: "Europe discovered America because it was necessary for her to do so." ❐

A NEW IMAGE OF THE WORLD

BY WILCOMB E. WASHBURN

Within a matter of years, the great maritime discoveries brought sweeping changes to cartography

Left, a 12th-13th century map of the world with (above) a depiction of Adam and Eve in the Garden of Eden. Right, a world map from the first modern atlas, the Flemish cartographer Ortelius's *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (1570).

A glance at the two maps on this page and the page opposite shows the remarkable change in the cartographic representation of the Earth's surface brought about during what has been called the "Great Age of Discovery". Both maps derive from European sources, and hence might be considered "Eurocentric" in character. But they represent almost diametrically opposed intellectual conceptions, one reflecting medieval thought, the other Renaissance thought.

The medieval map is the product of a Europe wedded to the ideals of Christianity, an inward-looking vision of man's corrupt nature.

The Renaissance map is the product of a Europe excited by the possibility of escaping from such a grim fate to a more optimistic future defined by space rather than time and controlled by man rather than God.

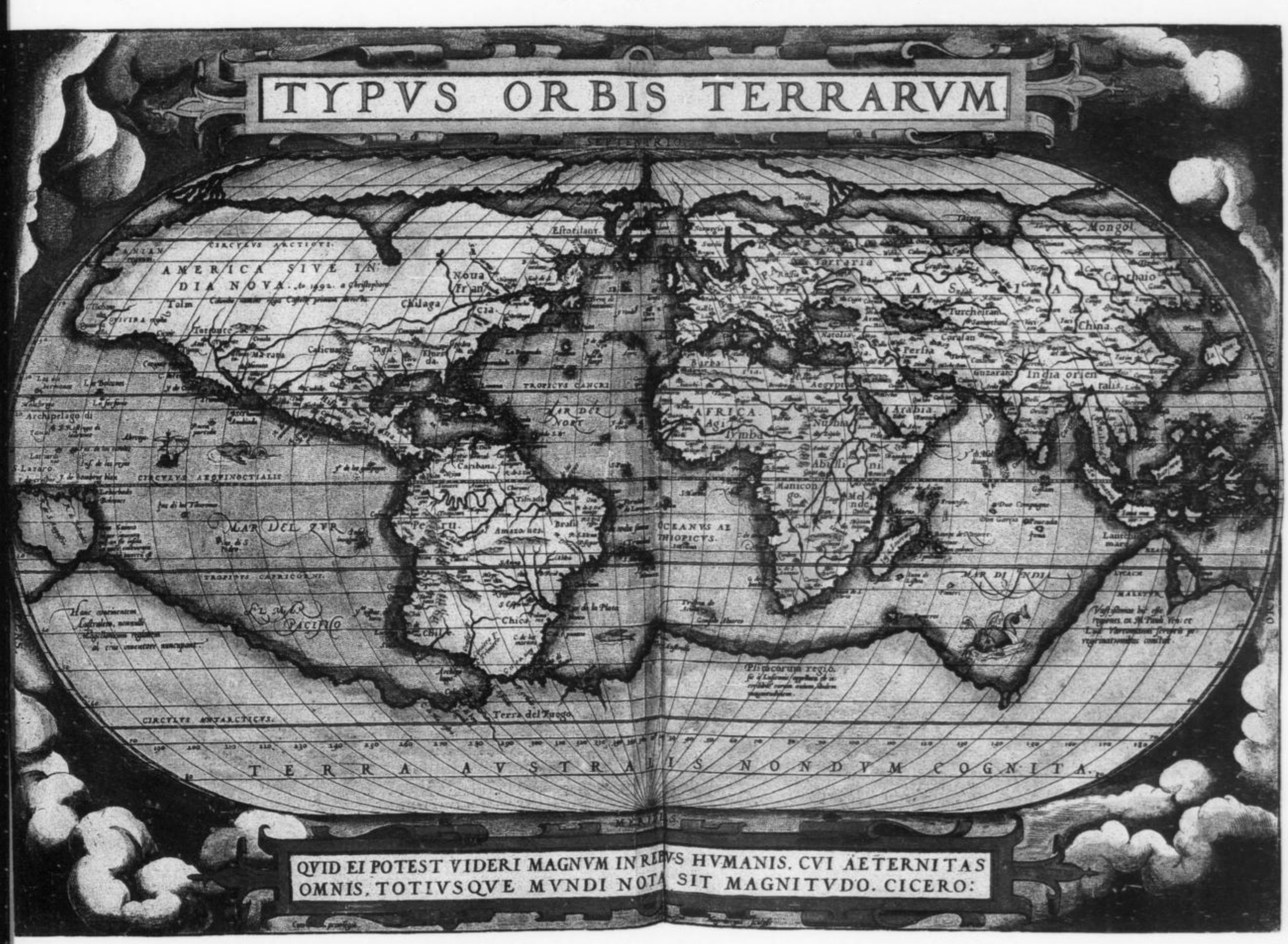
It is true that those Europeans who, like Columbus, sought to go beyond the bounds of the unknown, often stated their motives in terms of Christian ideals. But there was an inevitable mixing of worldly and pious motives. On the one hand, Columbus was always conscious that his given name "Christopher" signified "Christ-bearer". On the other, the wealth that he hoped to obtain (for his sovereigns and for himself) by his great enterprise of sailing west was to be obtained largely by trade.

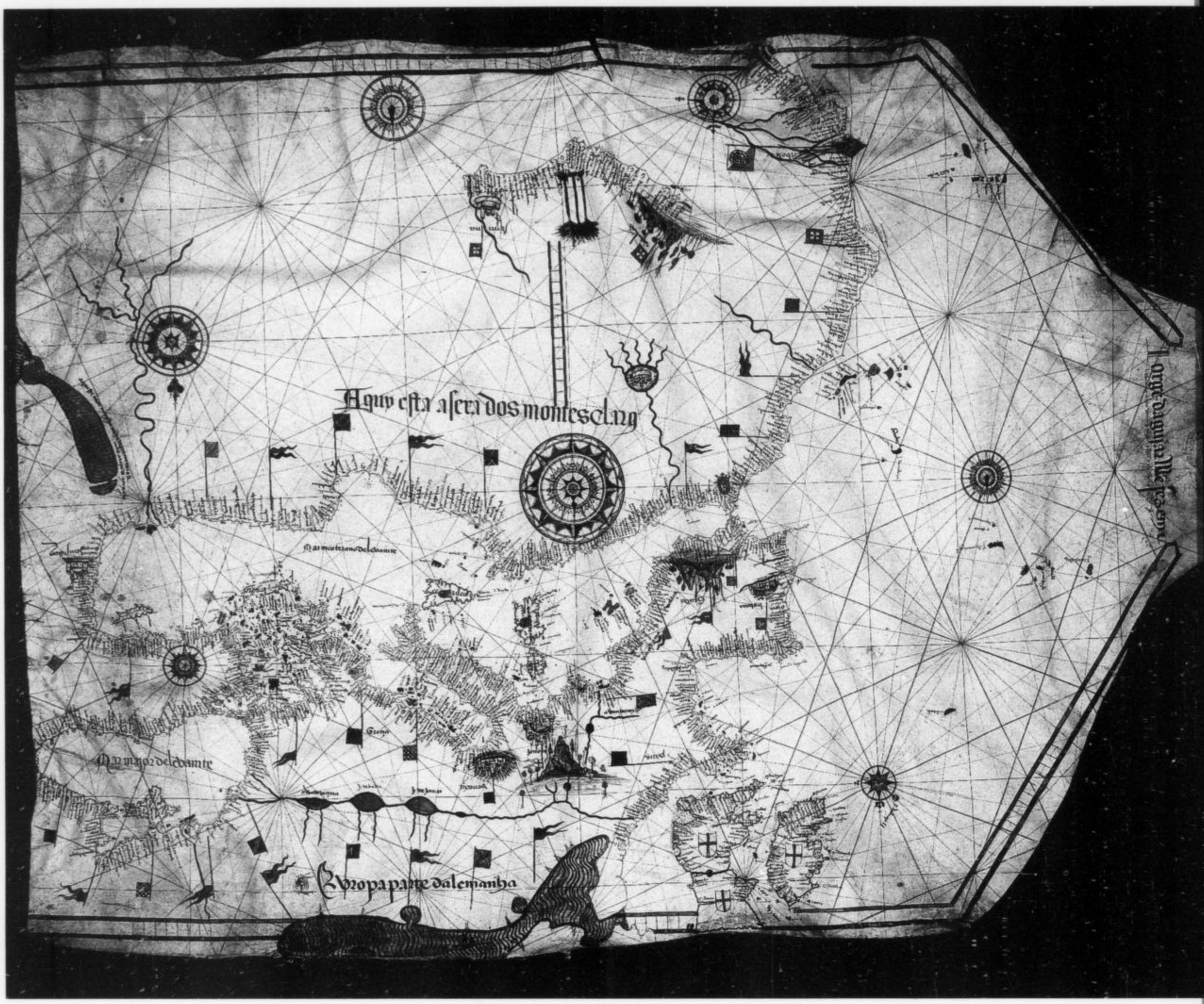
In the eastern portion of the medieval T and O maps—so called because their outline form resembled the letters T and O—was located the Christian Paradise. The stylized land masses of Asia, Africa and Europe were grouped around the centre of the map where Jerusalem was located. The Mediterranean Sea separated Europe and Africa, and a band of water—a circumambient Ocean Sea—surrounded the three land masses, which made up the *oikoumene* or *orbis terrarum,* the inhabited world known to Europeans.

Although some ecclesiastical figures and many ordinary people assumed the Earth to be as flat as their senses perceived it, knowledge of the sphericity of the Earth was widespread among the learned. The circle of the T and O maps can represent an attempt to depict a globe as well as a flat disc. The narrow river of ocean encircling the *oikoumene* can be imagined to extend around the unseen portion of the globe.

A SEA ROUTE TO ASIA

The sphericity of the Earth was, of course, the underlying basis for assuming that one could reach the east by sailing west—Columbus's guiding navigational principle. The practical basis for believing in the possibility of such a voyage was the comparatively short distance between the western shores of Europe and the eastern shores of Asia. Classical writers such as Seneca had anticipated the time when the Atlantic Ocean would be crossed and Thule (Iceland) would no longer be "ultimate", that is, the end of the European world. The fifteenth-century Florentine scholar Paolo Toscanelli encouraged King John II of Portugal as well as Columbus to try to sail across the Atlantic because he believed it could be done in a matter of days. Convinced by this and by many other arguments and "proofs",





The first signed and dated Portuguese portolan chart, that of Jorge Aguiar (1492).

Columbus would for years beg support for his scheme from a succession of sceptical European monarchs.

In order to counter the argument that he had probably underestimated the distance to Asia via the western route, Columbus argued that he would be able to replenish his ships at known offshore islands of Europe (such as the Canaries), unknown but imagined islands like Antillia, and islands such as Cipango (Japan) known to exist but never visited by Europeans, to say nothing of the myriad isles reported by Marco Polo in the ocean south and east of India. Some of the latter, which can be equated with the Indonesian archipelago and other Pacific or Indian Ocean islands, were reported by Polo to be occupied by naked people. Hence, when Columbus found islands inhabited by naked people in America, he could confidently assume that he was in Asian waters.

Columbus continued to believe that he had reached Asia, even after concluding, on his third voyage, that he had discovered in South America a "new" or "other" world. Columbus's underlying Christian assumptions also led him to speculate on whether he had not also found the location of the Terrestrial Paradise—the Garden of Eden—in South America, and to postulate that the globe was not precisely round like a ball, but formed with a slight protuberance—which he compared to the nipple on a woman's breast—which would bring Paradise closer to Heaven, as it was reported in the theologically-tinged travel literature of the time.

The French scholar Abbé Raynal wrote in his *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies* (1770) that "No event has been so interesting to mankind in general, and to the inhabitants of Europe in particular, as the discovery of the new world, and the passage to India by the Cape of Good Hope."

The cartographical results of those two events are illustrated in the manner in which the narrow surrounding sea around the *orbis terrarum* on maps of the medieval period explodes and forces cartographers to redraw

their maps with new projections and new lands to emphasize the existence of what increasingly came to be called a "New World", separate and distinct from the "Old World" of the medieval *oikoumene.* Among the many myths that were discarded was the medieval assumption of a torrid equatorial zone that could not be crossed.

NEW LANDS AND NEW PROJECTIONS

The map that marks the transition between the medieval past and the Renaissance future is the large wall map made by the monk Fra Mauro in Venice in 1459, and which is now in the Biblioteca Nazionale Marciana in that city. Extensive legends on the map provide information and speculation about the outlying regions of the *orbis terrarum.* Notable is the absence of a closed Indian Ocean, which was a feature of the world maps incorporated in the late-fifteenth-century editions of the text of the first-century-AD Greek scholar Ptolemy's *Geography.* That text, already known to the Arabs, was translated from the Greek into Latin in 1406. Soon manuscript and, later, printed editions appeared throughout Europe.

Ptolemy's text, as it comes down to us from the original Greek through various sources, suggests that the Indian Ocean was a closed sea, though a strong case can be made for the opposite view. It is significant that both Arabic cartography of the period—for example the twelfth-century cartographer Al-Idrisi's map—and the 1459 Fra Mauro map, compiled long before the actual doubling of the Cape of Good Hope by Bartolomeu Dias, assumed an Indian Ocean open to voyagers from Europe hoping to reach the east.

When Bartolomeu Dias returned to Lisbon after rounding the Cape of Good Hope on his 1487-1488 voyage, Columbus was in Lisbon still hoping to convert King John II to his plan. According to Columbus, he was with the king when Dias presented his findings that the way to India was open in this direction. The voyage effectively meant defeat for Columbus's efforts to enlist Portugal's support for his proposed western route; another monarch would have to be persuaded.

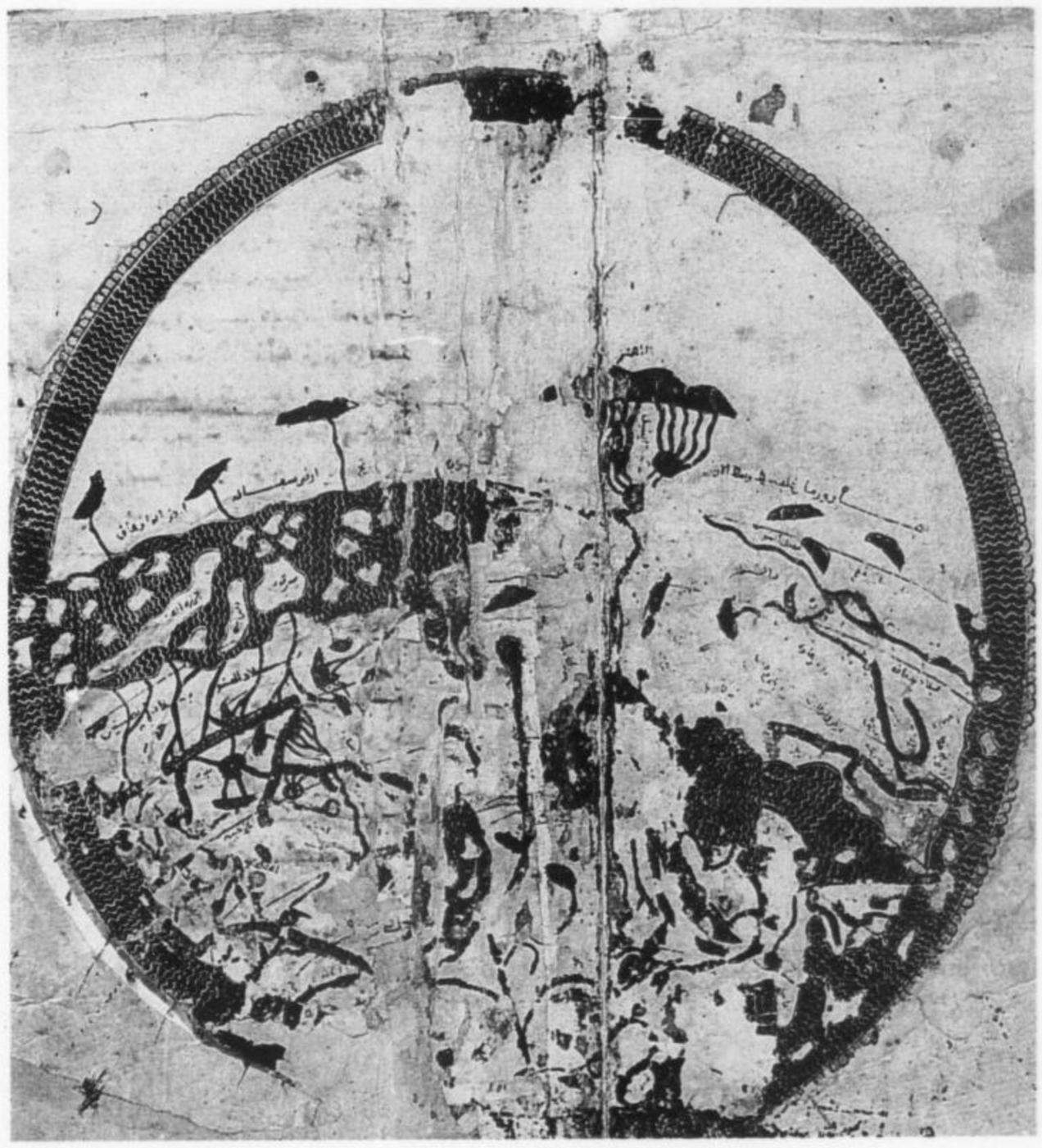
The actual results of the voyage of Dias, the culmination of the long Portuguese effort to send vessels down the coast of Africa (well recorded in fifteenth-century portolan charts), is best seen in the map of Henricus Martellus Germanus, a German working in Florence, from about 1489. The map records, on its African portion, the experience of actual Portuguese navigators. Further east it reflects the more speculative Asia represented on the world maps of the Ptolemaic atlases of the fifteenth century. The long Golden Chersonese peninsula on Ptolemaic maps represents the Malay peninsula, which Columbus was trying to sail around during his last voyage, as Marco Polo had done when he returned from China to Europe by ship in the thirteenth century.

Perhaps the best representation of the world as visualized by Europeans on the eve of Columbus's first voyage is the globe of Martin Behaim of 1492. Behaim, a native of Nuremberg, spent much of his life in Portugal, where he was involved with the royal court, apparently in promoting and/or evaluating schemes for exploration and discovery. His globe makes understandable the confidence of Columbus in believing that he could cross the Ocean Sea with the aid of stops on the way at the islands of Antillia and Cipango.

THE FIRST TRUE MAPS

The origins of the scientific cartography that rapidly developed in this period derive jointly from the theoretical work of ancient Greeks like Ptolemy, the development of portolan charts by Mediterranean mariners, and the evolution of scientific instruments such as the compass, the quadrant and the astrolabe. The understanding of much of the theoretical and practical geographical knowledge of the ancient Greeks was conveyed to medieval Europe by the recovery of Ptolemy's *Geography.*

The two most notable features of Ptolemy's work were his sophisticated instructions for projecting the Earth's curved surface accurately on a flat surface, and the conceptual framework by which any point on the globe could be represented as the intersection of two geographic



A 13th-century copy of a world map produced in 1154 by the Arab cartographer Al-Idrisi. In accordance with a convention of Arab cartography, the south is shown at top of map. At left is the Indian Ocean, open to the Orient.

A 17th-century watercoloured engraving showing Dutch sailors poring over their maps and navigational instruments. Skilled navigators, the Dutch brought Iberian maritime supremacy to an end.

co-ordinates. For this purpose, the Earth's surface was divided into 360 degrees of longitude and latitude, a technique devised by Ptolemy's predecessors. Ptolemy's *Geography* was, in large measure, a listing of places on the face of the Earth recorded according to their geographical co-ordinates.

The oldest surviving example of the portolans or marine charts that were heralded by Charles Raymond Beazley as "the first true maps", date from the late thirteenth century and are contemporaneous with the medieval T and O maps and religious *mappaemundi* such as the famous Hereford Cathedral world map of about 1290. The new form, the product of the Mediterranean sailors' firsthand experience, continued to evolve for the next three centuries. The Mediterranean Sea is the focus of virtually all such portolan charts, although they increasingly incorporate the Atlantic coastlines of Europe and Africa, as well as the islands immediately adjacent to both.

As befitted their practical purpose, the portolan charts were usually accompanied by a scale of miles and a network of rhumb lines. The emphasis on coastal navigation from promontory to promontory and from port to port is evident in the care with which the coastal regions are recorded while the interiors are normally left blank. The marriage of the navigational chart and Ptolemy's graduated maps begins with an anonymous Portuguese chart of about 1500, the first upon which is incorporated a scale of latitudes.

With the breaking of the chains of the ocean sea by seamen like Columbus, the portolan charts gave way to larger *mappaemundi*, world maps increasingly combining the meridians and latitudes inherited from the Greeks through Ptolemy with the careful attention to precise location made possible by astronomical observations of the Sun and stars by use of the astrolabe, and calculations of lunar eclipses. The invention of printing allowed astronomical tables, such as Abraham Zacuto's *Almanach Perpetuum* (1496), showing the declination of the Sun at particular times and places, to be more widely disseminated than when they remained in manuscript.

Columbus and Dias, and many other early explorers, were badly "off" in their calculations of latitude in both western and southern hemispheres. More accurate (but still imperfect) calculations were made by learned men of the period, such as Mestre José Viwinho, the Jewish astronomer who sat on the Portuguese commission that turned down Columbus's proposal in 1485. Even more difficult was the determination of longitude, a problem that was not finally solved until the invention of the chronometer, or marine clock, by John Harrison in 1761, in response to the prize announced by the British parliament in 1714 for a practical way of finding longitude at sea. Until that time estimates of a ship's longitudinal position on the face of the globe depended largely on "dead reckoning", the subjective estimate of speed and distance travelled. Little wonder then that early maps reflect the limitations of determining both latitude and longitude accurately!

Cartographic examples of the increasingly accurate vision of the globe are illustrated in maps like Abraham Ortelius's world map of 1570 from the first edition of his *Theatrum Orbis Terrarum* (the first modern atlas), Gerhard Mercator's world map from his atlas of 1595, issued after the great cartographer's death, and Jodocus Hondius's *Novissima ac exactissima totius orbis terrarum*, published in Amsterdam in 1634.

The growing prominence of English, Dutch and French exploration and colonization activities in the late sixteenth and early seventeenth centuries, challenging Spanish and Portuguese claims in both western and eastern hemispheres, and the development of printed rather than manuscript maps by the cartographers of the northern European countries, resulted in a shift of the cartographer's craft from the southern Mediterranean countries to the northern European countries, and were additional factors in the increasingly accurate rendition of the Earth's surface.

It was not until the eighteenth century, however, particularly as a result of Captain Cook's voyages to the Pacific and the use of the chronometer, that the form of the entire Earth—including the Pacific as well as the Atlantic basins—began to take on the cartographic precision with which we are familiar today. ❐

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FOREIGNERS WHO SERVED SPAIN

BY JUAN GIL

The welcome extended to cosmographers and navigators from other countries was one of the glories of Renaissance Spain

"The Reception of Christiopher Columbus by Isabella and Ferdinand the Catholic" (1860), by the French painter of historical subjects Eugène Devéria.

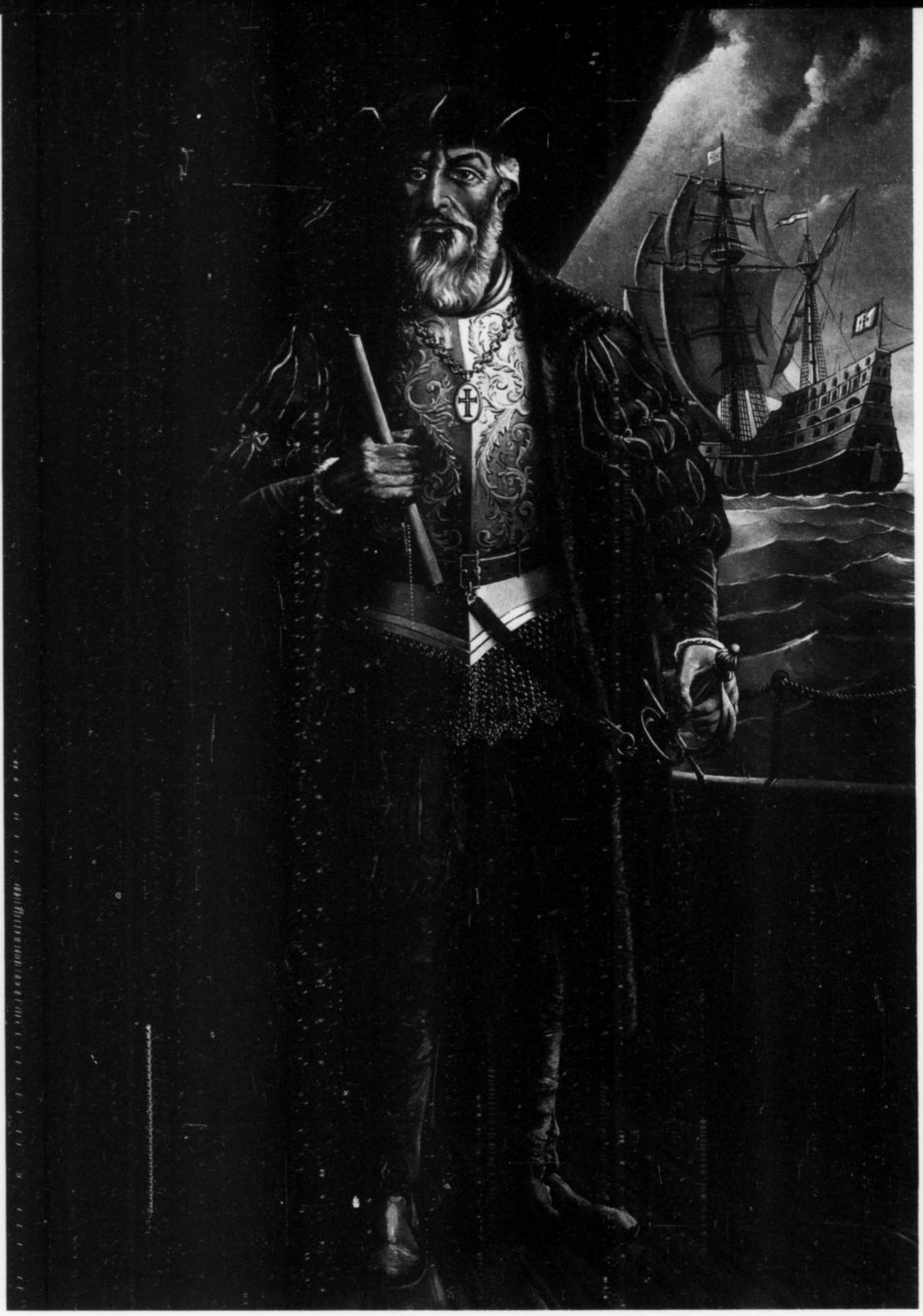
BETWEEN the late fifteenth and the early sixteenth centuries, Spain was host to a large number of illustrious foreigners. Some of them were only passing through, but others eventually settled there permanently and in many cases their adoptive country profited from the qualities they may not have been able to use in their land of origin.

The presence of foreigners in a country may sometimes be a pointer to the existence of certain failings in it and, as happened in Spain, help to bring these failings out into the open. At the end of the Middle Ages, Spain was a country of many shortcomings and weaknesses which belied its outstanding achievements and may be seen as part of the alternating pattern of darkness and light that is a characteristic feature of Spanish history. It seems inconceivable that a country like Castile, which was capable of producing such an accomplished work of literature as Fernando de Rojas's *La Celestina*, should be lacking in humanists. And yet nobles and royalty alike went off to Italy in search of Latin tutors for their children. It was in this capacity that scholars like Pedro Mártir de Anglería, Lucio Marineo Sículo, the Geraldini brothers, and many others came to Spain, while Antonio de Nebrija and Rodrigo de Santaella journeyed to Bologna to complete their education at the college founded by the Spanish cardinal Albornoz. Similarly, many of Spain's printers came from Germany, the most outstanding being the Combergers of Seville, who carried on the family tradition in the New World by setting up the first printing shop of the Indies in Mexico early in the sixteenth century.

Many of Spain's shortcomings were plain to see and it was only natural that the country should have looked elsewhere in order to compensate for them. Sometimes, however, when such a course did not really seem necessary, foreigners were welcomed and accepted with an alacrity that surprises us today, given as we are to more insular ways in spite of the apparent cosmopolitanism of the modern world. In those days perhaps Spain was more flexible and accommodating than it is now. We certainly did not lack for generals in the sixteenth century, and yet the French Constable de Bourbon was summarily appointed Captain-General of the Spanish armies which took Rome in 1527 and in which German, Spanish and Italian soldiers fought side by side. Some decades later, it was the turn of the Genoese military commander Spínola to win fame fighting in Flanders in the service of Spain.

AN OUTWARD-LOOKING AGE

Indeed, one of the most striking features of the great age of the Spanish discoveries was the number of foreigners who played a decisive part



Vasco Da Gama (left) and Bartolomeu Dias (right), portraits in oils painted in 1969 by José Dias Sanches for the Naval Museum in Lisbon.

in them. The list of names is impressive. The first Admiral of the Indies, Christopher Columbus (1451-1506) was from Genoa. Magellan (1480-1521), who discovered the Straits bearing his name and gained access to the "South Sea", the ocean mistakenly called Pacific, was of Portuguese origin. The three great pilots of the *Casa de la Contratación de las Indias*[1] were foreigners: Amerigo Vespucci (1454-1512), who went by the name of Américo Vespucio in Spain, was a Florentine who acquired Castilian nationality; Juan Díaz de Solís (who died in 1516) was Portuguese; and Sebastian Cabot (1476-1557) was an Englishman whose father was Venetian.

Spain was certainly not lacking in good navigators and reputable cosmographers. Vicentiáñez Pinzón was as good a sailor as Solís and proved as much in 1492 and in 1499, when he discovered the mouth of the Amazon, and again in 1508, when he followed the Central American coast from Honduras to Yucatán. Juan de la Cosa was as skilful a cosmographer as Américo Vespucio. Yet the fact remains that preference was given to competitors from other countries than Spain.

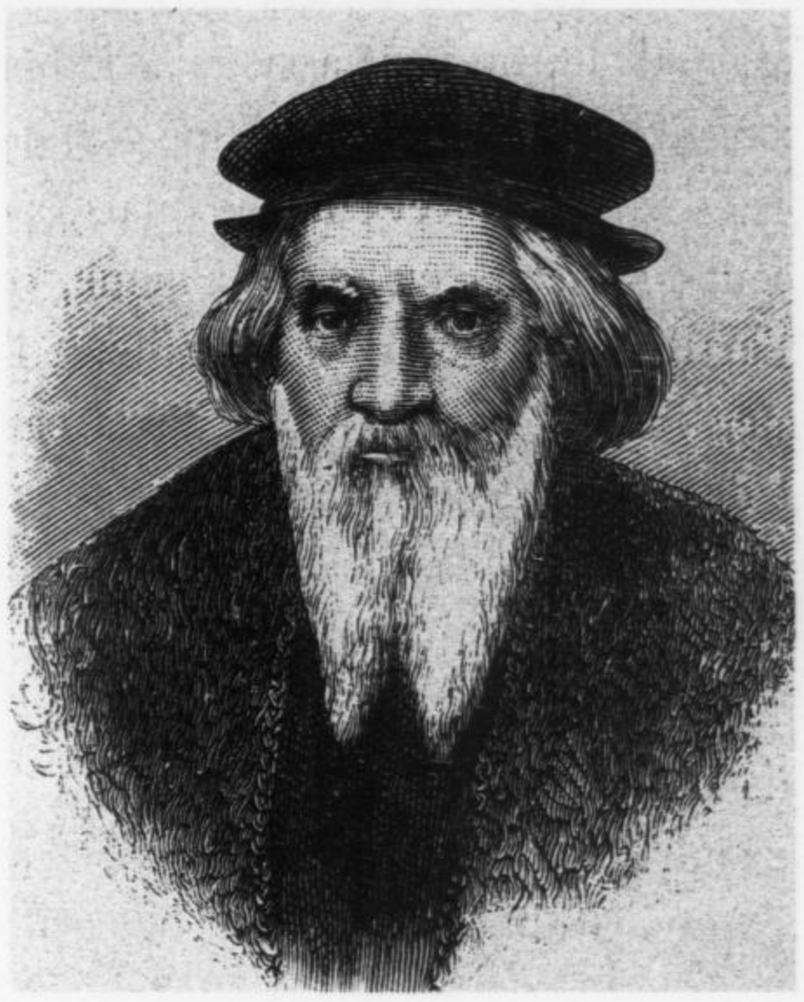
Considerations other than the intrinsic qualities of the individuals concerned were clearly taken into account when the Spanish Crown chose its servants. It was not advisable to be proud or ambitious: Vicentiáñez Pinzón and Juan de la Cosa both made the mistake of seeking office as Governors of the Indies. Another factor that may have gone into the reckoning was the prestige of a navigator's country of origin, as in the case of Américo Vespucio, who basked in the glory of Renaissance Florence. Cabot was a persuasive talker who claimed to be the recipient of divine inspiration. His eloquence and distinguished bearing may have stood him in good stead. Monarchs—or their

1. The "House of Commerce" established at Seville in 1503. It scheduled shipping, collected duties and trained navigators. Its buildings today house the Archives of the Indies.

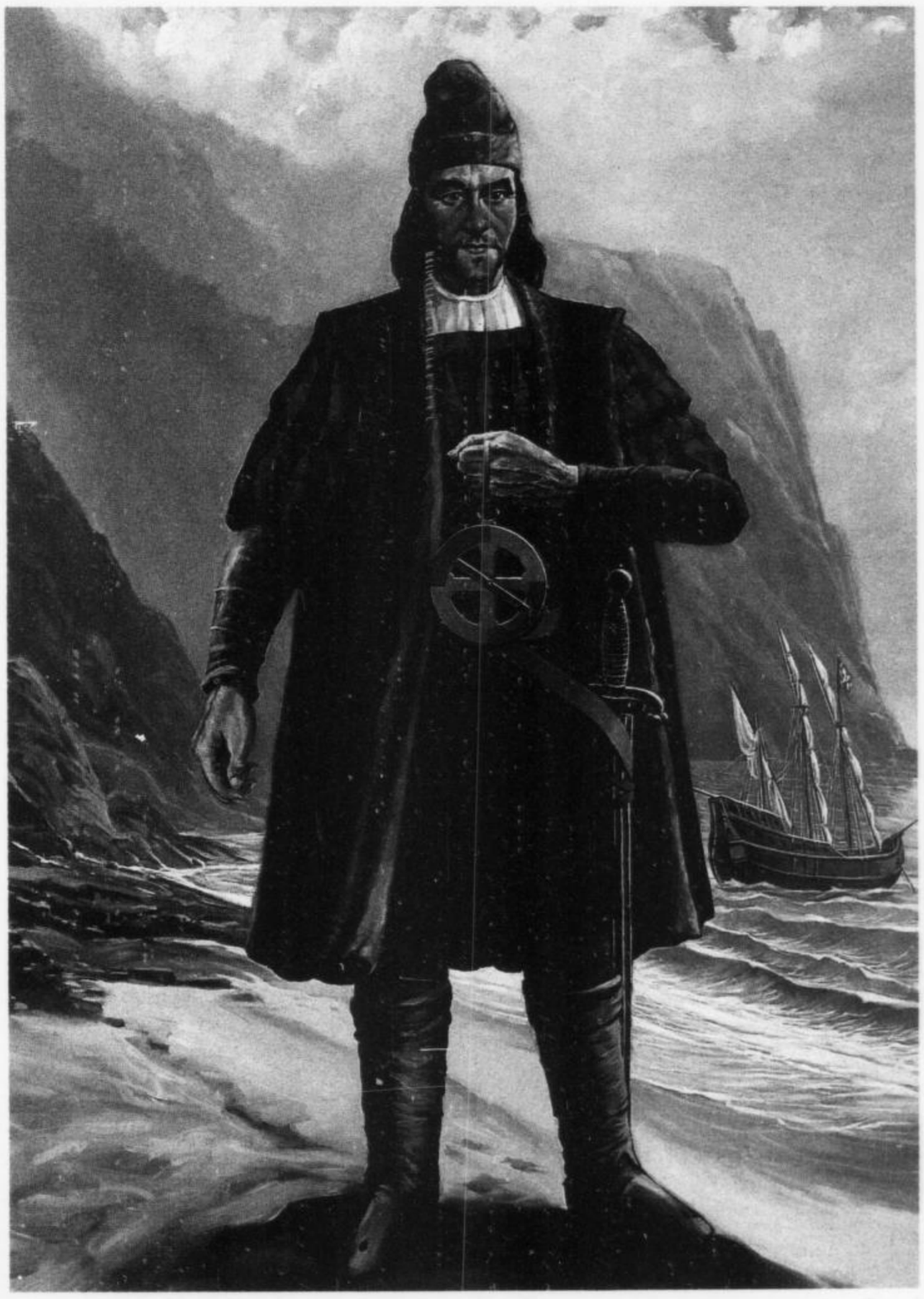
advisers—may also have simply been blessed with good fortune when they took foreigners into their service; they certainly did the right thing in welcoming Columbus and Magellan with open arms. The ambassadors of the period were not mistaken when they remarked on the wisdom with which the Catholic Monarchs chose their associates.

To my mind, this open-minded and outward-looking attitude was one of Renaissance Spain's finest qualities. Today the idea of an Italian becoming a Spanish minister is almost unthinkable, whereas Columbus in his time rose not only to the rank of Admiral but became Viceroy of the Indies. It is not so long since professors in the Spanish university system were required to be of Spanish nationality, as though our lecture theatres were being used for trafficking in highly secret matters that should on no account be allowed to leak out. Five hundred years ago, a Portuguese citizen, Barbosa, could teach at Salamanca without having to go through any tiresome bureaucratic formalities, yet he was, in theory, a national of a rival power.

The one thing all these foreigners who came and settled in Spain had in common was a wish



Sebastian Cabot, illustration from a 19th-century book on navigation.



to be integrated into the society of their time. Their first concern was to cross the language barrier, and the men who embarked on the voyages of discovery all successfully overcame this obstacle, even though they may have retained the slight trace of an accent and the occasional peculiar turn of phrase. However, they were deeply influenced by their newly acquired language and the large number of Spanish borrowings which crept into the letters that Américo Vespucio wrote to the Medicis in the Tuscan dialect bear witness to the considerable extent to which he had assimilated Spanish culture. Columbus acquired an excellent command of Castilian Spanish and seldom used Italian, apart from a celebrated note scribbled in the margin of his copy of the works of Pliny.

ENTRANCED BY SPAIN

If foreigners were to be well received, it was politic for them to take a Spanish wife. Almost all the navigators mentioned above made a point of fulfilling this requirement, even though they tended to club together by nationalities and form clans. The one exception was Columbus, who did not marry his Cordoban mistress Beatriz Enríquez Harana, perhaps so as not to jeopardize his prospects at Court. Columbus, the most austere of them all, was the only one whose descendants were to achieve distinction. Vespucio and Cabot left no offspring, and Magellan's wife died in childbirth, as did their new-born child, while Magellan himself lost his life on the Philippine island of Mactán at more or less the same time. Nothing is known of the fate of Cristus de Solís, the son of Juan Díaz.

The main thing is that almost all these foreigners ended up, sooner or later, by identifying themselves with Spanish values, which differed in many respects from those of other countries at that time.

Columbus himself is an excellent example of this. In adult life, Cristoforo Colombo the

Genoan became Cristóbal Colón the Spaniard. Keen to promote trade, taciturn and grumpy, something of a miser, a stubborn defender of his rights and at the same time an inveterate dreamer—Columbus was all of these. Eventually he came to adopt the way of thinking of the Spaniards, wanted to be like them and to compete with their heroes.

It was under this "Castilianized" exterior that the Admiral of the Ocean Sea faced one of the most tragic moments of his life, when he was removed from office as Viceroy in 1500. After being humiliated by the Franciscans and stripped of his powers, Columbus wrote to Doña Juana de la Torre, the governess of Prince Don Juan de Castilla, not to demand that he be paid back the millions of ducats he was owed but rather to plead that he "be reinstated in his honour"—a splendid phrase worthy of the dramatist Calderón de la Barca.

A few paragraphs later, the great navigator went back on his words and, although not a particularly enthusiastic warrior, boasted of his heroic deeds in battle, saying: "I should be judged as a captain who set out from Spain for the Indies bent on conquering many warlike peoples with very different customs and beliefs where, through God's will, I have placed another world under the rule of Their Highnesses, the King and Queen". Hence, Columbus wanted to go down in history less as an admiral, or even a discoverer, than as the conqueror of boundless lands, where he purported to have subjugated fierce and and restless peoples. This statement is particularly incongruous since these terrifying enemies were in reality the kindly and peaceable Taïnos, who formed the human cargo of Indians he dispatched in chains to the Spanish monarchs, by the same token burdening Queen Isabella of Castile with an uneasy conscience.

Magellan, another non-Spanish navigator, was also captivated by Spain. No sooner had he arrived in Seville than he submitted a plea to the Emperor Charles I, asking to be allowed to join the military order of Santiago. His request was granted almost immediately and may perhaps indicate even more strongly than in the case of Columbus a desire to belong to the Spanish nobility.

After 1492, Spain had to contend as best it could with the many challenges brought by the conquest and colonization of territories situated hitherto unimaginable distances away. However, before it was caught up in this whirlwind, and even afterwards, it welcomed many foreigners who made major contributions to its glory and gave them a social status which they had been denied in the countries where they had been born. Cabot never received in England the cordial reception which Columbus enjoyed in Spain. This is a highly topical lesson in an age like ours, when some disturbing xenophobic tendencies are emerging. In the past, Spain had the magnanimity to welcome Columbus and Magellan. Had it not done so, it would not have become the country it is today. ❐

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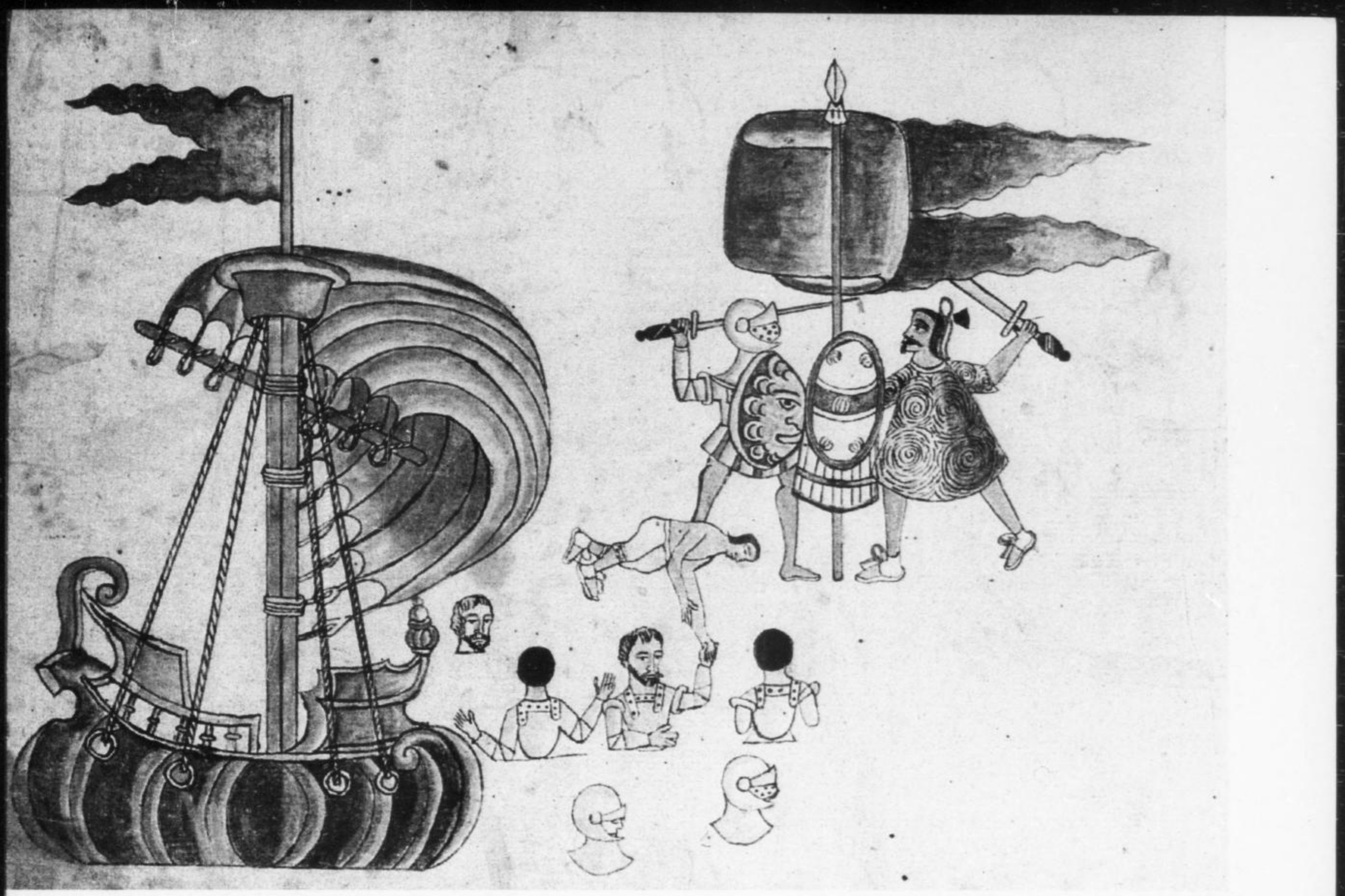
Encounters unlimited



DISCOVERY AND SELF-DISCOVERY

BY JOSÉ AUGUSTO SEABRA

The quest of Spanish and Portuguese navigators who plied the oceans and explored unknown lands had a universal significance

Above,
a page from a 16th-century parchment manuscript, the Codex Azcatitlán, showing Hernán Cortés being saved from drowning by an Indian.
Opposite page,
the Stone of the Sun, a massive monument (height 3.35 metres, weight 24 tons) also known as the Aztec calendar (Mexico City, early 16th century).

EVEN today, when we live in an interconnected world that is reaching out into interplanetary space, it is hard to contemplate dispassionately the achievements of those who, by crossing the oceans five centuries ago in search of other continents, other peoples and other civilizations, gave, in the words of Camões in *The Lusiads,* "new worlds to the world".

What took place in those times can be described either as a discovery or as an encounter, depending on the point of view of the observer. Be that as it may, the impulse behind it was a quest, a search for knowledge, a reconnaissance of other people and their ways. In its anthropological and cultural effects the movement was two-way. The navigators who set out from Europe came back enriched by new values and symbols that set the beliefs and thought-patterns of the Old World in a fresh context.

There is still fierce debate over the correct interpretation to put on this turning-point in the history of civilizations. Therein lies the proof of its continuing relevance. The historical record, with its areas of light and darkness, is there for all to see: even if, alongside their acknowledged goal of Christian evangelization, the Portuguese and Spanish navigators were also driven by selfish motives that sometimes led them into terrible aberrations, it was nonetheless in search of a universal humanity that they rode the waves and explored unknown lands.

Some recent commentators have attempted to rank the great discoveries in terms of the degree of distance between the civilizations which they brought into contact. On this score Columbus's discovery of America rates, according to the critic Tzvetan Todorov, as the only one in which what he calls "the discovery of the other" could be considered to be total. "There was never the same sense of radical strangeness in the 'discovery' of other continents and other peoples," he writes. "Europeans were never entirely unaware of the existence of Africa, India or China"[1].

THE NATURE OF THE QUEST

Certainly "there was no European or African element in the indigenous American civilizations," as the Portuguese historian Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho has pointed out, and "reciprocally, there was no American contribution to the civilizations of Europe or of Africa until

the fifteenth century". But Magalhaes Godinho also notes that there was definitely a link between the Amerindian peoples and the civilizations of the Far East by way of the Pacific. "There were frequent contacts and migrations between the two regions; what is more, cultural property travelled from west to east." [2] In other words, virgin civilizations, totally isolated from the rest of the world, may never have existed, even if examples of relative insularity can be found at certain times and places in history.

Nonetheless, the urge towards the unfamiliar that underlies the process of discovery has varied in intensity from people to people, or more accurately between the civilizations to which they belonged. For to discover others is ultimately to discover—or rediscover—oneself. To paraphrase the French philosopher Paul Ricœur, it is always a quest for "oneself in the guise of someone else".[3]

That is why the anthropologist Claude Lévi-Strauss sees in "Amerindian dualism" the explanation for "a receptivity to other people that revealed itself strikingly at the time of the first contacts with the whites, although the latter saw things very differently." [4] He thereby reverses, in a sense, Tzvetan Todorov's perspective: in his view it was really the indigenous peoples who discovered the Spaniards rather than vice versa. Even if Columbus could write of his adventure in 1492, "What I want is to see and discover as much as I can. . .", one must also remember, as the French writer Régis Debray has reminded us, that the Spanish navigator also sought inspiration from Old Testament prophecies to justify his conquests. "We too easily forget," Debray writes, "that the 'great discoveries' were seen by contemporaries as rediscoveries of things hidden in the memory, as a verification of the archives".[5]

Such, at any rate, are some of the interpretations put upon the "encounter between two worlds" whose anniversary is being celebrated this year. There are others too, if one extends the canvas to include the other lands the Spaniards and Portuguese shared out between them, with differing intentions, under the sponsorship of Pope Alexander VI at the Treaty of Tordesillas of 1494.

TOWARDS A UNIVERSAL CIVILIZATION

Despite certain obvious similarities, the behaviour of the Portuguese and Spaniards was in fact very different throughout the era of discovery. While the Spaniards tended to emphasize their own culture, the Portuguese, whether in Africa, Brazil or Asia, were more sensitive to the interaction of peoples, notably as symbolized by racial intermixing. Even the Portuguese language aided the process; its flexibility encouraged the formation of Creole dialects, the so-called *papiamento* tongues, while it was concurrently serving as a lingua franca on both sides of the Atlantic as well as in the Pacific and Indian Oceans.

Jaime Cortesao, the historian of the Portuguese discoveries, brings two crucial points together when he writes that, "In exploring the oceans and discovering the techniques necessary to cross them, the Portuguese not only gave European civilization its most powerful instrument for establishing global hegemony: they also opened up the path to the unification of humankind." In this way "the first step towards the creation of a universal civilization was taken".[6]

A universal civilization—what René Maheu and Léopold Sedar Senghor called the *civilisation de l'universel*—lay at the end of the great quest for oneself in others that inspired the discovery of "new worlds". For as Fernando Pessoa reminded us, the most important of all discoveries is the concept of discovery itself. ❐

1. Tzvetan Todorov: *La Conquète de l'Amérique: La question de l'autre.* Seuil, Paris, 1982.
2. Vitorino Magalhaes Godinho: *Les Découvertes—XV[e].-XVI[e].: Une Révolution des Mentalités.* Autrement, Paris, 1990.
3. Paul Ricœur: *Soi-même comme un autre.* Seuil, Paris, 1991.
4. Claude Lévi-Strauss: *Histoire du Lynx.* Plon, Paris, 1991.
5. Régis Debray: *Christophe Colomb, le visiteur de l'aube.* La Différence, Paris, 1991.
6. Jaime Cortesao: "The Expansion of the Portuguese in the History of Civilization". Imprensa Nacional, Lisbon, 1983.

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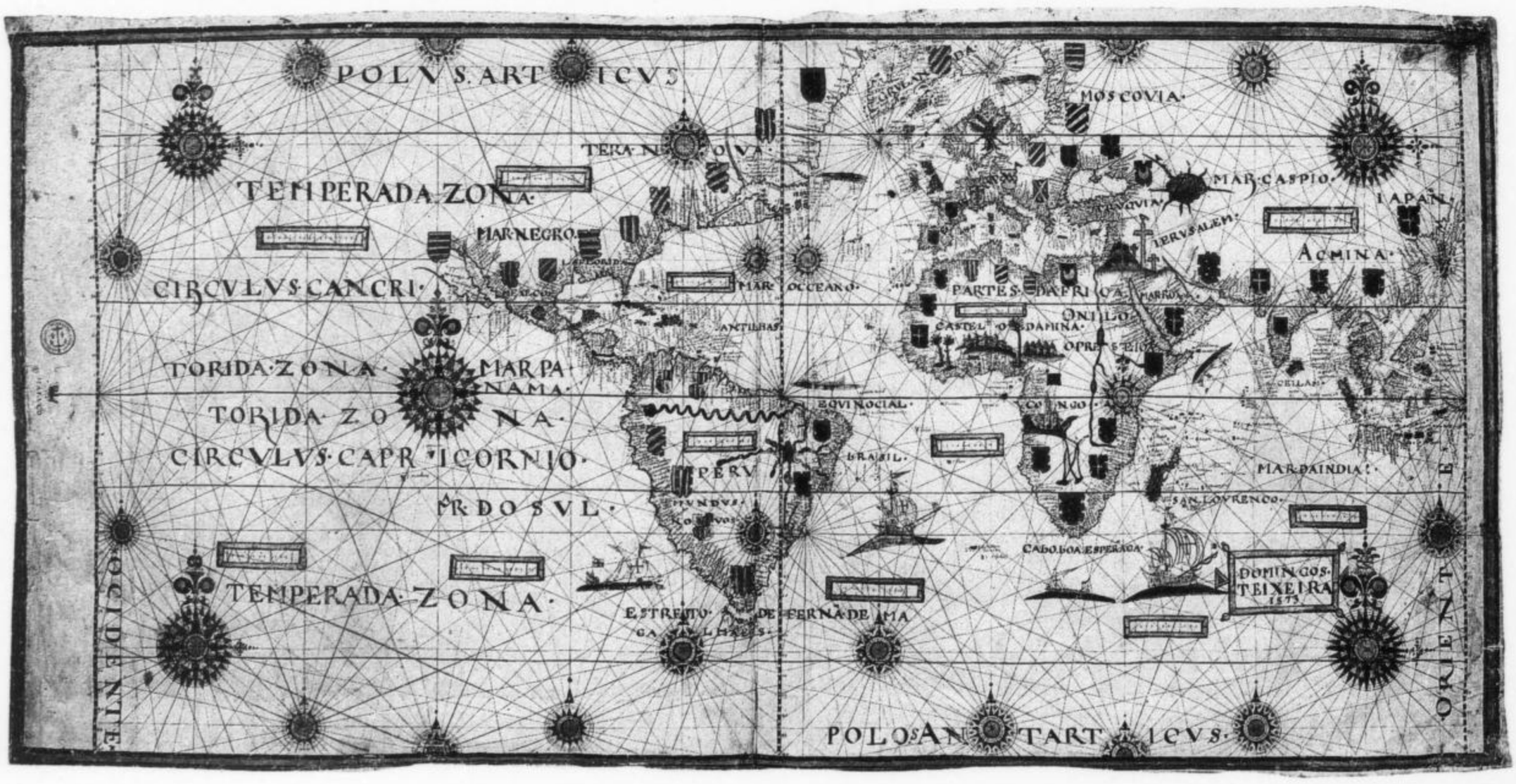
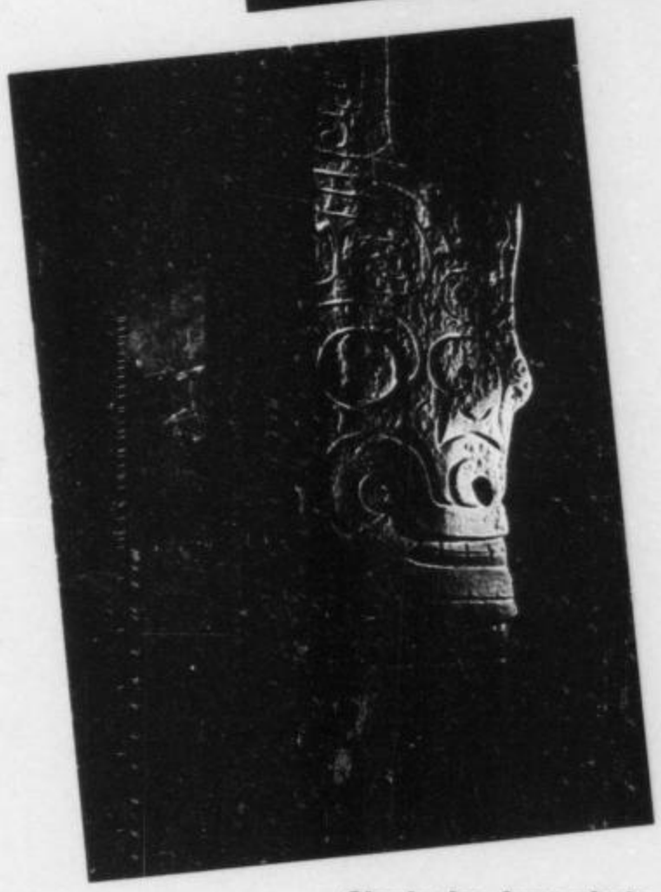


The line of demarcation traced from north to south by the Treaty of Tordesillas (1494) can be seen in this 16th-century planisphere by Domingos Teixeira. Spain was given exclusive rights to the region west of the line, Portugal to the east.

America before Columbus



Clockwise from photo above: Carved granite monolith known as the *Lanzón* or the Great Image. Chavín culture (Peru, 1200-600 BC). Anthropomorphic terra-cotta statuette from Ecuador. Late Chorrera period (1800-500 BC). Jadeite Olmec mask (Mexico, 1500-100 BC). Gold figurine forming the upper part of a recipient. Quimbaya culture (Colombia, 200 BC-500 AD).

A land of many peoples

The American continent was inhabited by several thousand groups of Indians speaking between 1,500 and 2,000 different languages. These peoples were dispersed over vast cultural regions in which there was a wide variety of ecosystems and types of social organization. The situation could scarcely have been otherwise in this enormous landmass in the two hemispheres, stretching 16,000 kilometres from its northern to its southern extremity, a distance almost double that which separates the furthest reaches of eastern Asia from the Atlantic seaboard of Europe.

There was no direct contact between the hunting, fishing and gathering peoples living in the frozen wastes of Alaska and the great plains at one end of the continent, or between their counterparts living in Tierra del Fuego and the Argentine pampa at the other end. However, this multitude of scattered independent groups were constantly on the move. They had spiritual resources that compensated to a great extent for the seeming simplicity of their material culture, and displayed considerable technological ingenuity that was extraordinarily effective in enabling them to make the most of the fragile ecosystems in which they lived.

Clearly, these peoples could not dominate the vast expanse of America. Even so, some of them seem to have been capable of covering great distances. Some migrant groups of the Tupi-Guarani tribes crossed the thousands of kilometres separating the Paraná-Paraguay basin from that of the Amazon. Migrations and trade were made easier by the continent's network of rivers and lakes, which formed natural highways to which the road system built by the great empires was only an adjunct. However, mastery of space depended primarily on the numbers of people and the dynamism of their societies. At its peak, the Inca empire extended between the Pacific and the Andes for a distance of 4,000 kilometres from north to south.

Some 20 to 25 million people lived on the central plateau of Mexico. Between 10 and 12 million people were subjects of the Inca empire. Perhaps as many as 6 to 8 million people lived on the large Caribbean island which was to become Hispaniola (Haiti and the Dominican Republic) and 1.5 million Guarani may have lived in Greater Paraguay. All told, Indo-America had some 60 to 80 million inhabitants.

Guy Martinière

This text has been extracted from *L'État du monde en 1492*, a book edited by Guy Martinière and Consuelo Varela and published by Éditions de la Découverte/Sociedad estatal para la ejecución de programas del Quinto centenario, 1992

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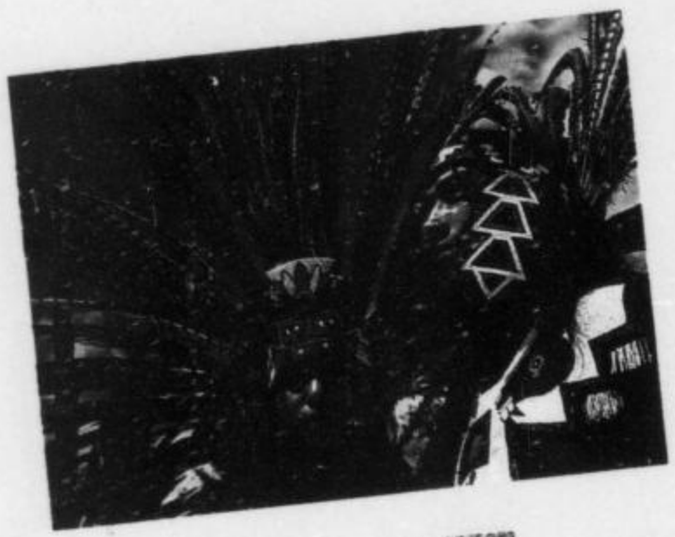
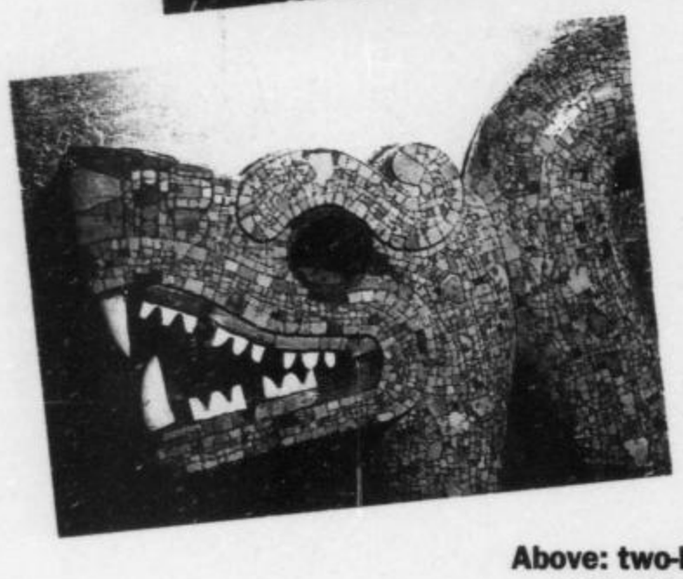
The Aztec Empire at the height of its power





Above: two-headed snake (detail) in turquoise mosaic. Aztec civilization (1325-1521). Top: Nahua Indians wearing Aztec head-dresses at the feast of Notre Dame, Guadelupe (Mexico). Below: The Avenue of the Dead and the Pyramid of the Sun at Teotihuacán, northeast of Mexico City (300-700 AD).

The cultural fabric of the valley of Mexico was the product of the successive peoples which had settled there from the beginning of the early Pre-Classical period around 1800 BC until the time of the Aztecs.

The first significant sign of development was the construction, in the north-east of the valley, of the city of Teotihuacán, which in the early centuries of the Christian era saw the emergence of one of the most remarkable civilizations of Meso-America. Between 200 and 100 BC, the inhabitants of Teotihuacán raised the imposing pyramids of the Sun and the Moon along the Avenue of the Dead. Around these austere, geometric edifices, a great ceremonial centre and the biggest Meso-American city of the age were built.

The people of Teotihuacán had a calendar and a system of numbers, and practised a form of hieroglyphic writing. They made astronomical observations which they applied to the orientation of their monuments and their system of divination. They possessed notions of planning, the organization of urban settlements, and civil engineering. They knew the properties and medicinal uses of many plants. Their arts, especially architecture, low-relief sculpture, fresco painting and ceramics, were distinguished by a style that was sober but also highly expressive and rich in symbolism. They worshipped Quetzalcóatl, the plumed serpent, and their cosmogony had an important influence on later cultures.

Then came decline. Between 650 and 700, the city seems to have been looted and demolished. Around 726, groups of people from a mysterious place called Tamoanchán arrived in the valley, and ceremonies to celebrate the coming of the Fifth Sun were held in the sacred city in 751. This date marked the beginning of a new historical era, that of the Toltecs. The Toltec period, which reached its apogee between 752 and 1200, was regarded in later centuries as a legendary period of peace, abundance and development of the arts, crafts and sciences.

After long wanderings from a region called Aztlan or "place of herons", the Mexicas (or Aztecs as they are generally known) settled on an island on a lake in the central valley of Mexico. In 1325, on the order of their tribal divinity, Huitzilopochtli, they founded what was to become the powerful city of Tenochtitlán, whose splendour captivated all who set eyes on it.

This nomadic tribe mercilessly extended its control over the neighbouring peoples. Its dominion covered the central and eastern region of present-day Mexico, and it established enclaves on the Gulf of Mexico and the Pacific Coast. But there were still pockets of resistance within this territory, and the hostility of the peoples who lived in them, above all those of what is today the state of Tlaxcala, would play a decisive role in the Spanish conquest.

The Aztec empire, or Culhua-Mexica, was based on a triple alliance between Tenochtitlán, Texcoco and Tacuba. At the end of the fifteenth century it

controlled some thirty-eight provinces extending over almost half a million square kilometres, a quarter of the area of modern Mexico. Nahua was the lingua franca and the people shared common religious practices.

Estimates of the population of central Mexico when the Spanish arrived have ranged from 4.5 million to 25.2 million. For Tenochtitlán the figures vary between 72,000 and 300,000.

The vast empire the Aztecs governed from their little island was highly organized. Tribute in food, clothing and precious objects from the subject peoples reached the capital by water across the lake or over causeways. Thousands of people thronged the city's great markets, where a huge variety of products could be found. The right to own property was guaranteed, and priests and warriors occupied privileged positions within the castes. Everything that had been created by the people of Teotihuacán and the Toltecs was taken to a high degree of development by the Aztecs: calendar systems and astronomical calculations, techniques of civil engineering and urban planning, education, the preparation and interpretation of historical books and rituals, cosmology and religion, methods of divination, arts and crafts. However, Aztec society at every level was permeated by a messianic religion which provided a pretext for imperial conquest and a justification for human sacrifices, which were deemed necessary to nourish the life of the Sun through blood.

José Luis Martínez

The Mayan Empire: city-states in decline

The splendours of Mayan art: Above: The Temple of the Magician at Uxmal, atop a huge pyramid. Classical period. (Yucatán state, Mexico, 600-900 AD). Right: The colossal head of a Mayan divinity (Copán, Honduras, 8th century AD). Below: Detail of a fresco representing a procession of musicians in a temple at Bonampak (Chiapas, Mexico, 600-900 AD).

The Mayan world was at the height of its power during the Classic period, between 250 and 900 AD, when cities such as Yaxchilán, Bonampak and Palenque were built in Chiapas, Quiriguá and Copán in Honduras, and Piedras Negras in Guatemala. These cities were remarkable for their architecture, low-relief sculptures, frescoes, ceramics, steles and altars. During the same period, astronomy, mathematics, calendrical calculations and a system of hieroglyphic writing also developed. Political power was exercised by a priestly caste.

Around the middle of the ninth century, for reasons still not fully understood, perhaps connected with the exhaustion of the land and the outbreak of armed conflict, these centres of habitation and ceremony were abandoned. During the same period, Toltec influence began to be felt, the cult of Quetzalcóatl appeared and, at the beginning of the eleventh century, the new cities of Chichén Itzá, Uxmal and Kabah were built. The Mayapán League was created and brought together the forces of the city of that name and those of Chichén Itzá and Uxmal.

Mayan culture declined between 1200 and 1517. Once the League was dissolved, around 1450, the major population centres were transformed into minor states, and human sacrifice became a very common practice. The arrival of the Spaniards marked the end of a brief period of cultural splendour.

In the classical and post-classical periods, the big cities were a model of sumptuous and harmonious design, with palaces, temples, courts for ball games, observatories, baths, archways and tombs.

The most outstanding expression of Mayan sculpture was in low-relief, notably on steles where it was used to depict divinities, human beings and minutely rendered columns of glyphs. The most successful example of the art of fresco from the point of view of composition and design is at Bonampak, where battles, processions and prisoners are depicted.

José Luis Martínez

The Inca realm of the four parts

In 1492 Túpac Inca Yupanqui (1471-1493), the tenth emperor of the dynasty, had ruled for twenty years the "realm of the four parts", Tahuantinsuyo, which covered almost 900,000 square kilometres.

Strictly speaking the Inca state was not so much an empire as an assemblage of highly diverse regions and peoples, in many cases jealous of their autonomy yet united by strong political and economic links maintained by a state apparatus whose seat was at Cuzco in the south of present-day Peru. Yupanqui had succeeded to the throne on the abdication of his father Pachacútec. He wore the *mascapaicha* (a scarlet headband which was the insignia of his supreme power) and his authority was virtually absolute.

However, Inca absolutism was more apparent than real. The Inca was at the head of a complex centralized administration. A large corps of officials travelled endlessly through the subject territories, keeping an eye on affairs, carrying out censuses, making sure that work exacted as tribute was carried out, and maintaining social order. All the threads of this vast web led back to the political and symbolic centre of the state at Cuzco, a splendid city with vast squares and imposing buildings, palaces and temples. The dozens of settlements and fortresses scattered through the realm were remarkable for the purity of their architecture and rigorous ground-plan and for the quality of their masonry.

However, the power of the Incas was very recent. In less than two centuries it had been imposed on over eight million people.

To maintain the cohesion of this immense conglomeration, the emperor had four main resources. The subject peoples were obliged to use a common language, Quechua. Some of the inhabitants of potentially troublesome regions were deported to areas where Inca influence was strong, and replaced by more docile people, who helped to promote integration in this mosaic of cultures and peoples. A gigantic network of roads, estimated at almost 20,000 kilometres, covered the entire country. These carefully maintained *Inca ñan* (Inca roads), which ran in a straight line, crossed mountains and canyons by means of liana bridges or staircases (the wheel was unknown). Travelled by *chasqui* (relay runners) who could spend the night at the *tampos* (shelters and storehouses), located at intervals along them, they were the ubiquitous symbol of Inca authority. The cult of the Sun Inti, the tribal god of the Incas, became the state religion.

In 1492, the reign of Túpac Yupanqui was drawing to a close. He was assassinated in the following year and one of his sons, Huayna Cápac, succeeded him and began a troubled reign (1493-1527). His rule was marked by new conquests and by the struggle of his sons Huascar and Atahualpa, between whom he unwisely divided the empire, which collapsed in 1532, five years after his death. The Spanish were the main architects of this collapse, but the empire bore within it the seeds of its own destruction.

Danièle Lavallée

Above: General view of Machu Picchu (Peru, 1400-1500), the fabulous Inca city that was mysteriously abandoned in the 16th century and was not rediscovered until 1911. Below: *Quipu*, knotted cords of different sizes and colours, were used by the Incas to record numerical data. The word *quipu* means "knot" in the Quechua language.

THE PACIFIC SHUTTLE

BY ALFONSO DE LA SERNA

A maritime network of communication between three continents

Above, the oldest known terrestrial globe. It was made in 1492, shortly before Columbus's voyage. Below, Magellan discovers the strait that bears his name. Engraving by Théodore de Bry (1592).

THE German geologist Alfred Lothar Wegener (1880-1930), who died in Greenland while attempting to prove his theories on continental drift, claimed that at the beginning of geological time there had been a single large protocontinent. He believed that at some time there had been an enormous convulsive fracture and that what is now America had become detached from the main block and had drifted westwards to take up a position in the middle of the ocean between the Euro-Afro-Asiatic "West" and the "East" of Asia. If this theory is correct, America might be said, geologically speaking, to have "chosen" to look out across the Atlantic towards Europe, and to back onto the Pacific, being positioned to the west of Europe and to the east of Asia. The sole purpose of this rather literary digression is to shed some light on the human affairs that have been superimposed on these mysterious physical processes.

Millions of years after the displacement of continents, three small ships with a great destiny ahead of them, crossed the ocean deeps created by that ancient gash in the face of the Earth, stumbled across the enormous detached fragment and, in a manner of speaking, brought it back into the lap of Europe again.

Paradoxically, the Spanish had set out in search of the countries of the Orient, which at

that time were shrouded in a legendary aura. Columbus's voyage was supposed to take him to the Indies, which were already being visited by the Portuguese in the long sea voyages they undertook in the opposite direction, towards the mythical land of Ophir. As a result of their extraordinary maritime expeditions, the Portuguese and Spanish alike were to show that the Earth was round—just like the globe which Martin Behaim had constructed in his workshop in Nuremberg!—rather than an enormous flat surface bounded on the west by the Atlantic Ocean and on the east by the remote seas of Asia. They sought successfully to prove that it was spherical and hence inherently one.

A year after Columbus's epoch-making voyage, Vasco Núñez de Balboa, a soldier and adventurer from the Andalusian city of Jerez, began to look for a route to the Pacific Ocean through Central America. Pitting himself against the difficulties of the wild and unexplored terrain, he led his troops through the tropical forest and, after countless hardships, succeeded in crossing what is now known as the isthmus of Panama. At dawn on 26 September 1513, from the top of a promontory, he saw, glistening in the rays of the rising Sun, the vast ocean that would come to be known as the Pacific. On reaching the shoreline, he waded dramatically into the water dressed in his suit of armour, with the standard of Castile in one hand and his sword in the other, and solemnly took possession of it in the name of his monarch.

'PRIMUS CIRCUMDEDISTI ME'

Then began what might be called Spain's century in the Pacific, with the voyage of Magellan and Elcano (1520-1521) who sailed across the Atlantic, and then crossed the newly discovered Pacific. Magellan died in the Philippines, but Elcano continued across the Indian Ocean, rounded the Cape of Good Hope on his way back to Spain and completed the first circumnavigation of the globe in history. Following his exploit, he had a terrestrial globe placed on his coat of arms, with the Latin inscription *Primus circumdedisti me* ("You were the first to sail round me"). In addition to the great voyages of all those who crossed the Pacific in one direction or the other, or in both directions, such as Loaysa, Elcano and Salazar in 1526, Saavedra in 1527-1529, Villalobos in 1542-1545, Legazpi and Urdaneta in 1564-1565, Arellano in 1565, Mendaña and Sarmiento de Gamboa in 1567-1569 and Fernández de Quirós in 1605-1606, a host of other less ambitious Spanish expeditions which set out to explore the vast expanse of the ocean.

By the end of this "Spanish century", Spanish sailors had discovered and named the archipelagos of the Philippines, Marianas, Carolinas and Marquesas, New Guinea, the Santa Cruz Islands, the Solomons, Hawaii, Wake Island, Guam, Iwo Jima, the New Hebrides, Guadalcanal, the Gilbert islands and the Marshall islands, the Galapagos, Juan Fernandez, Flores and Bikini, as well as the Torres Strait and *Austrialia* or Australia, named in honour of the Spanish kings of the House of Austria, not to mention many other lands with whose names we are no longer familiar.

At the same period, gallant English sailors also ventured into the Pacific, but their main purpose was to attack Spanish galleons and their rich cargoes, and to report to their sovereigns on the activities of the Spanish crown. In spite of these forays, the Pacific remained a Spanish preserve.

In the eighteenth century, when her power was starting to wane, Spain was still dispatching naval and scientific expeditions along the coasts of British Columbia and Alaska, the "Californias of the North". The place-names of the region perpetuate the memory of the Spanish sailors and scientists who, between 1773 and 1793, methodically explored the western coast of North America and investigated its physical contours, its fauna and flora and its human populations up to latitude 60° North, beyond the Aleutian islands not far from the Bering Strait.

Anonymous 18th-century painting of 3 caravels, the speedy and manoeuvrable craft that were much used on the great voyages of discovery.

THE FIRST REGULAR MARITIME SERVICE IN HISTORY

It is no exaggeration to speak of the "Spanish century" in the Pacific, when it is borne in mind that during this period the Spanish established their presence in the region over a period of 250 years through the creation, for the very first time in history, of a regular maritime service connecting two oceans. This service was provided by the celebrated "Manila galleons".

Between 1565 and 1569, another Spanish soldier, Miguel de Legazpi, conquered the Philippines, so named in honour of Philip II, on behalf of the Spanish crown, which made it one of its most substantial possessions and its main base in the Pacific. This large archipelago was

The port of Acapulco, an engraving by Théodore de Bry (1602).

an enduring legacy of the Spanish presence in the Far East, since it belonged to Spain for more than three centuries, until 1898. The Spanish came to display close affinities with the Asian world in their outlook and even in some of their customs.

Manila, in the Philippines, was the home port of the Spanish galleons that plied regularly across the Pacific to Acapulco on the Mexican seaboard.

The first crossing to Mexico took place in 1573, the last in 1811, 238 years later. The galleons, some of which had a displacement of as much as 2,000 tons, were designed in Spain but were built in the shipyards of Cavite, southwest of Manila, of tropical hardwoods capable of withstanding the difficult sailing conditions to which they were exposed.

The voyage from Acapulco to Manila, which followed the trade-wind route, took about sixty days, However, the return trip from Manila to Acapulco took much longer and was more dangerous. It was necessary to sail northwards, almost up to the latitude of Japan, in order to pick up the westerly winds and then make for the coast of Mexico across regions that were frequently swept by heavy storms. The outward and return voyages totalled some 18,000 nautical miles. For nearly two and a half centuries ships came and went with almost perfect regularity. And that was in an age of sails and the compass, navigation charts that left a great deal to the imagination, the trade winds, the Kuroshio or Japan current, typhoons, solitude, heat, scurvy, beri-beri and pirates.

The Manila galleons provided a regular link between Asia and Latin America but also with Europe, since their voyages were synchronized with the movements of the Spanish Atlantic fleets that plied between Spain and the Central American isthmus. Hundreds, indeed thousands of ships sailed the two oceans and formed transport networks that linked the three continents.

The Spanish port of Manila came to be a centre of world trade through which goods from Japan, Borneo, Java, the Spice islands, India, Ceylon, Siam, Cambodia and Malaysia all transited, either directly or via China. The galleons came there to take on board fabulous treasures that fascinated Westerners, such as gold, pearls, sapphires from Siam, ivory, lacquers, Chinese silks, amber, sandalwood and camphor,

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jade, Ming porcelain, musk, cinammon, cloves, pepper and curry. Along with these precious cargoes, however, they also carried away the ideas, tastes and traditions of the Asian Orient, which left their mark on Spanish America and captivated Europe, helping to arouse European interest in trading with Asia. A large number of "East Indies Companies" were founded, then and later.

A BRIDGEHEAD BETWEEN EAST AND WEST

It is true that prehistoric Asiatic peoples settled on the American continent by crossing the Bering Strait or by sailing to America from Polynesia, but it was the "discovery" of the Pacific in modern times that really opened up the gateway to America.

As the Mexican writer Eduardo Espinosa has noted, America has suffered from a loss of a sense of direction. Since Americans inherited the European outlook, they speak of Asia as being the Far East, although the east is actually situated to the west of America and America itself lies east of China and Japan. This unquestioning acceptance of geographical and cultural concepts specific to Europe has prevented America from seeing that Asia, which it regarded as being a long way away, was actually "somewhere else" and was coming ever closer to it across the Pacific, seeming to tap America on the shoulder and remind Americans of its existence. Indeed, there it is, dispatching to the shores of America wave upon wave of immigrants, whose burgeoning communities are contributing to a new racial mix and perhaps to the formation of a new ethnic and cultural melting pot with consequences that cannot be foreseen.

America is coming to realize at last that its position between two great oceans, the Atlantic and the Pacific, midway between Europe and Asia, is making it a bridgehead between East and West. These are two conceptual rather than geographical entities, which for centuries were thought to be at the opposite ends of a kind of huge rectangle, whereas in reality they are located on a sphere where the perspective keeps on changing according to one's viewpoint. As America looks out on one side on to a purely conventional "West" and on the other on to a no less conventional "East", it may one day be in the position to amalgamate the two, just as when it was discovered five centuries ago it contributed to the world the idea of its own sphericity, in other words of its possible unity.

Will America, after having been settled by people from Asia at the dawn of the human era and then resettled later by people from Europe, eventually become the ideal birthplace of what the Mexican philosopher José de Vasconcelos called "the cosmic race"? ❐

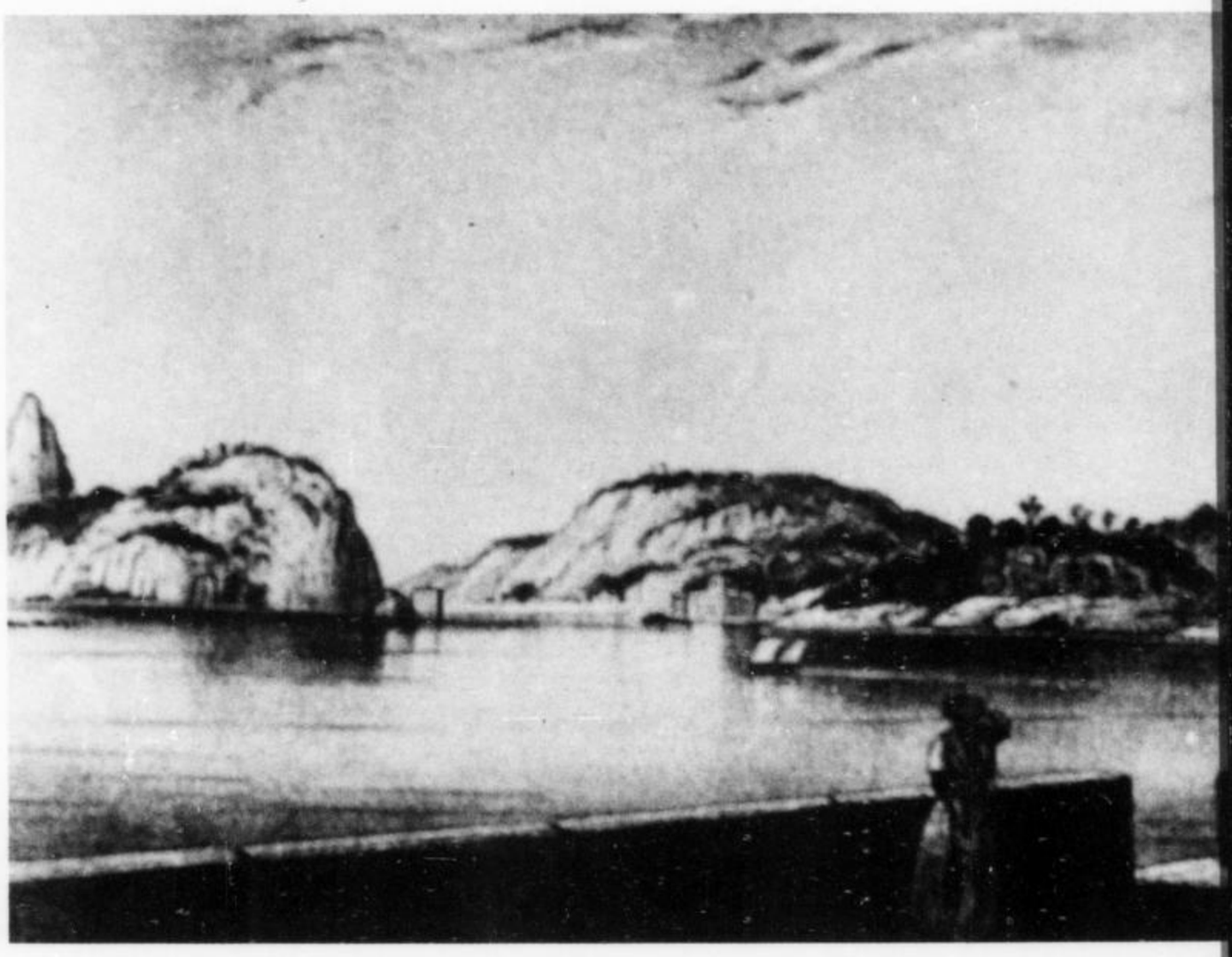
AMERICA AND RUSSIA: DIALOGUE FROM A DISTANCE

BY VERA KUTEISCHIKOVA

Surprising affinities link two regions separated by geography and history

THE lands of America set alight by the Conquest were still blazing when, at the other end of the world, in distant Muscovy, a theologian by the name of Maximus the Greek (1475-1556) had already recounted the exploits of the Spanish and Portuguese. His information was inaccurate, to say the least, and he did not even mention the name of Columbus. Nevertheless, he grasped the significance of the Discovery and predicted that a new human community would emerge from the coming-together of the Europeans and the indigenous peoples.

News from America was slow to reach Russia and what little there was came piecemeal from European sources. It was not until the eighteenth century, during the reign of



"Rio de Janeiro", a drawing by a Russian traveller, L. Visheslavtsev.

Peter the Great, that the Russians set up trading links with the American territories and came into contact with the inhabitants of California, which at that time was a province of the Vice-royalty of New Spain. They were thus able to add to their geographical knowledge and gain a clearer picture of America.

Russian society was above all interested in the Conquest as an event of global significance, and it was as such that it came to feature in the works of such leading authors as the poet and scientist Mikhail Lomonosov (1711-1765), the dramatist Aleksandr Sumarokov (1718-1778), the great fable-writer Ivan Krylov (1769-1844), and the poet Gavrila Derzhavin (1743-1816). Sumarokov puts forward a highly personal view of the Conquest in his "Conversation in the Kingdom of the Dead", consisting of a dialogue between Cortés and Montezuma, in which the conquistador claims that he owes his victory to the hatred for the Aztec emperor felt by his own subjects. The moral which the author, as a freethinker and fierce critic of absolutism, draws is perfectly clear: rulers must take care not to lapse into tyranny.

BOLÍVAR'S HAT

These eighteenth-century writings bleed with compassion for enslaved and oppressed indigenous peoples. They denounce the shackles of colonialism, but what their authors are really doing is to use America to point an accusing finger at Russian serfdom, which is likened to the institution of slavery in the American colonies.

This analogy is also drawn in the celebrated *Journey from St. Petersburg to Moscow*, by Aleksandr Radischev (1749-1802), the first plea for the abolition of serfdom in a country where two-thirds of the population were deprived of all rights. In one passage, Radischev recalls the summer afternoons when he lingered on the quayside, watching the ships from America that had brought back their rich cargoes of sugar, coffee, dyes and other precious fruits of the earth, still damp from the sweat, blood and tears of the people who had grown them. In this connection, the author makes an oblique allusion whose meaning only later becomes plain, when he writes: "Remember, as a friend once told me to do, that the coffee you pour in your cup and the sugar you dissolve in it were the cause of the martyrdom of your fellow-men and the reason for untold torture and outrage".

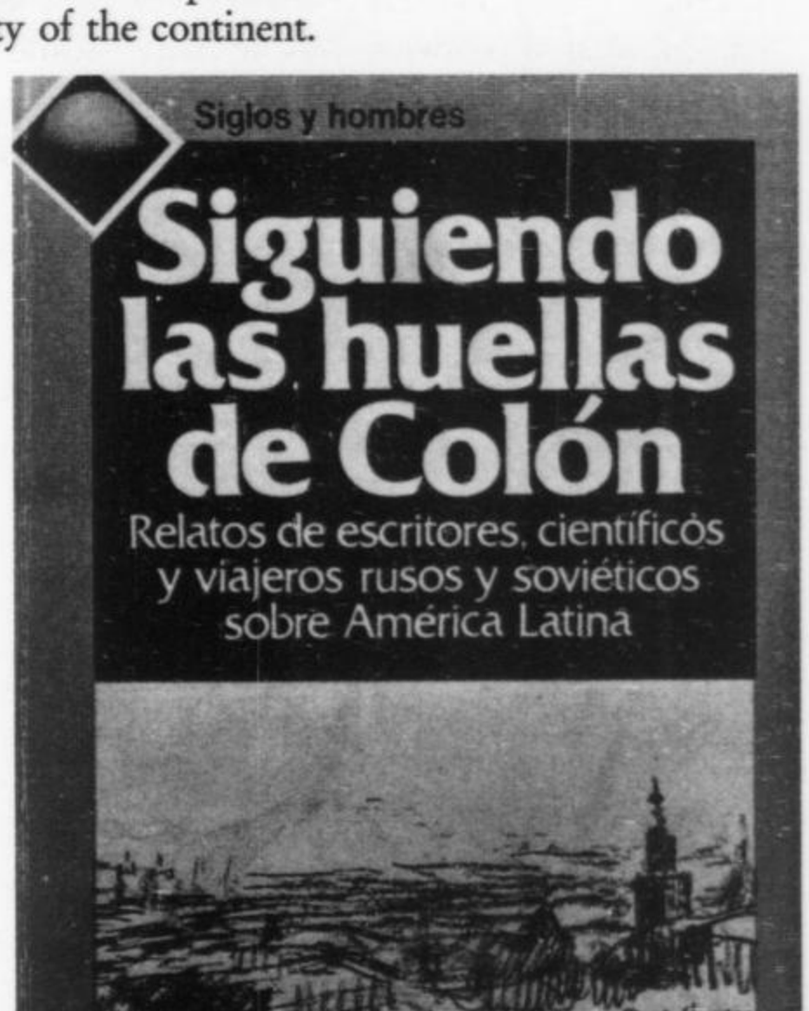
Radischev's pamphlet incurred the wrath of the Empress Catherine II and he was hauled before the courts. It was only then that the name of the unknown friend who had denounced the fruits grown with the sweat and blood of the American slaves became known. Radischev admitted that he had drawn inspiration from the *Philosophical and Political History of the Settlements and Trade of the Europeans in the East and West Indies*, which had been published in 1770 by the abbé Guillaume Raynal, a French philosopher. It is hardly surprising that Radischev should have referred to a thinker of the French Enlightenment, since Russian culture in the eighteenth century was profoundly influenced by that movement and embraced the ideas of Voltaire, Rousseau, Montesquieu and Marmontel, among others.

The Enlightenment reached Spanish America at the end of the eighteenth century, at the very outset of the anti-colonialist movement, which made Raynal's work the spearhead of its struggle against Spain. Here again, France was the go-between in the dialogue that was established between Russia and the Ibero-American world.

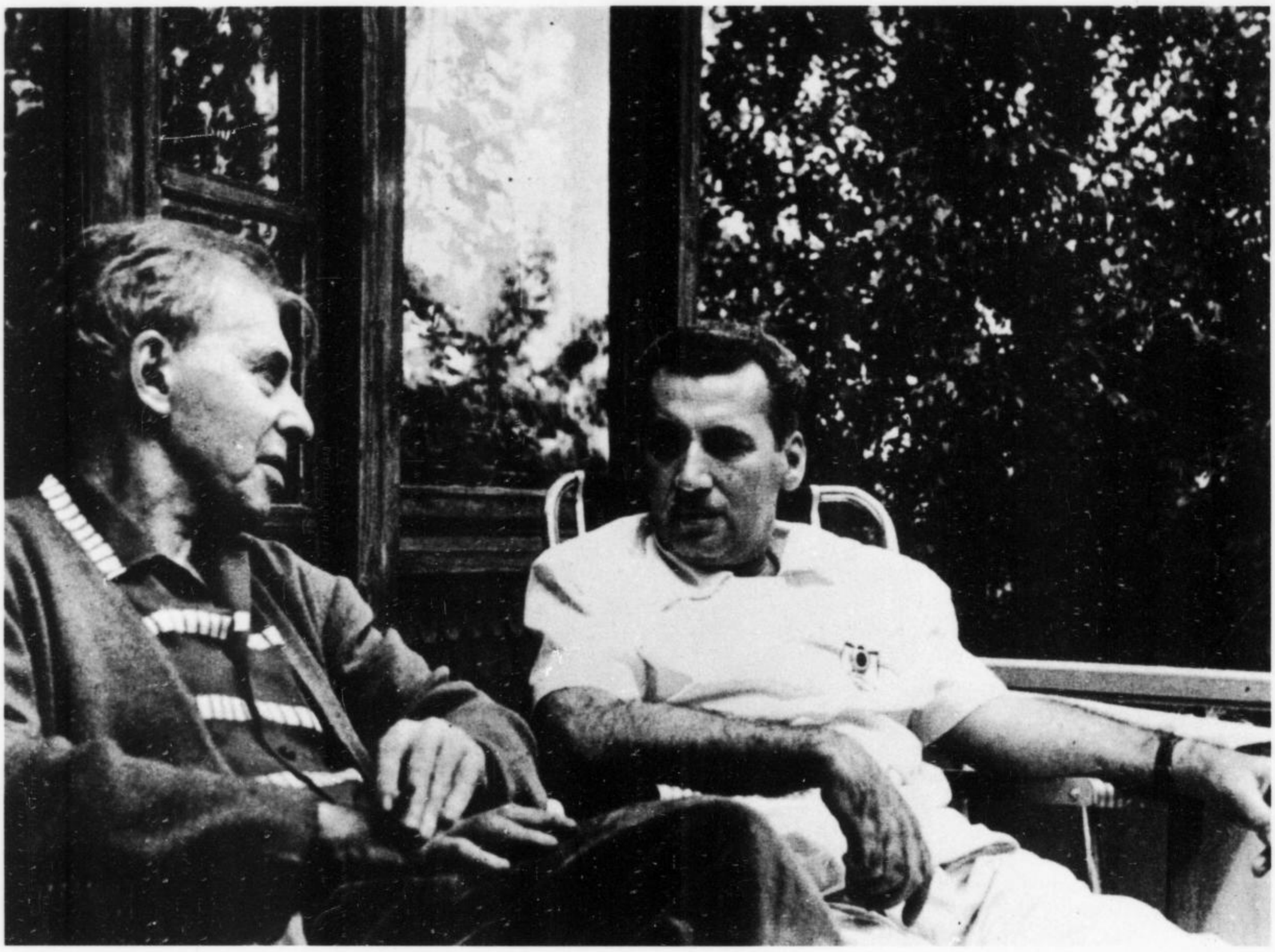
In Russia, Simón Bolívar became an almost legendary figure and enjoyed a vast reputation, which gave rise to a widespread fashion for a type of broad-brimmed hat imported from France. This exotic headgear is even mentioned in one of the masterworks of Russian literature, *Eugene Onegin*, the verse novel by Aleksandr Pushkin (1799-1837). The structuralist and semiologist Yuri Lotman has pointed out that the hat, which had been taken as a symbol by the Spanish American rebels, was used for the same purpose by the French liberals and was sported by the freethinkers and dandies of St. Petersburg, where it was known as a *bolívar*.

FROM THE RUSSIAN STEPPES TO THE ALTIPLANO

Later, Russian visitors to America were particularly struck by the originality of the continent.


Siglos y hombres
Siguiendo las huellas de Colón
Relatos de escritores, científicos y viajeros rusos y soviéticos sobre América Latina
Editorial Progreso

"In the footsteps of Columbus. Latin America as seen by Russian and Soviet writers, scientists and travellers". A book published in Spanish in Moscow in 1990.



At his dacha, the Russian writer Ilya Ehrenburg (1891-1967) with his friend the Brazilian novelist Jorge Amado.

However, their fascination with the splendour of the landscape did not prevent them from voicing their opposition to slavery. The exaltation of nature and the urge for freedom that were the characteristic features of nineteenth-century Romanticism profoundly influenced their view of the Latin American world.

As well as the logs kept by mariners, which are full of vivid although necessarily brief descriptions, there are more substantial accounts whose authors have not so much attempted to describe the landscapes as to analyse their views on the new social, political and ethnic issues which they encountered.

Aleksandr Rotchev, a writer who visited several Caribbean countries at this period, saw for himself the danger which North American expansionism represented for Central America and was appalled at "the cruelty of the customs and the intolerable treatment which the North Americans meted out to the natives of the country".

In the meantime, at the other end of the continent, Russian travellers repeatedly expressed their astonishment at the gauchos. In his "Voyage across the pampa of Buenos Aires", Platon Chikhachov, who crossed the vast plains of La Plata, admitted to feeling a mixture of admiration and fear for these proud, intrepid horsemen, with their haughty independence.

The accounts of Russian travellers in the New World are so varied that it is difficult to draw any general conclusions from them. However, nearly all of them, no matter how great their sense of wonderment at the landscapes, were unable to stifle their nostalgia for their far-off homeland.

There are insistent echoes of the siren call of Russia in "Through South America", a monumental work by the writer and diplomat Aleksandr Ionin, who lived in the region from 1892 to 1896. Ionin had a sharp and enquiring mind and described his experiences with a somewhat lofty detachment, although without losing sight of the finer points of detail. However, the interest and originality of this major work lies in the ideas he developed in it. These are encapsulated in his prose poem "Lake Titicaca", in which he departs from the Eurocentric view of history. At an altitude of 4,000 metres, beside a lake close to the sky, he experiences a kind of revelation. As he contemplates the natural wonders, he suddenly realizes that nature and culture are inseparably linked and that rational thinking stands condemned because it has been unwilling to recognize that fact. He writes: "I then saw that my native steppes, like these high plateaux, do not conform to the theories of life drawn from the writings of the Old World and that they both have to inspire us to look for new ways of thinking and reasoning."

Another illustrious visitor to the New World was the Symbolist poet Konstantin Balmont (1867-1942), who arrived in Mexico in 1905 and

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immersed himself in the atmosphere of the ancient Indian civilization which, he confessed, filled him with "feelings of magic". Like Ionin, he calls on his readers to acknowledge the limitations of the self-absorbed European view of things and urges them "to look out on plains and valleys, not from little Mont Blanc swarming with tourists but from the volcanic heights of gigantic Chimborazo and its snow-capped peaks, at the feet of which the Peruvians built temples of gold to the Sun and of silver to the Moon".

A NEW DIALOGUE

At the end of the nineteenth century, what had hitherto been an embryonic dialogue really began to take shape with the publication of the classics of Russian literature in Latin America, where the works of Turgenev, Tolstoy and Gorky aroused considerable interest. The Latin Americans discovered the harsh predicament of the Russian people, weighed down by the burden of social and spiritual bondage, and succumbed to the attraction of the "naturalist mysticism" in which "these vast and mysterious fastnesses" are steeped. The Venezuelan writer Arturo Uslar Pietri sees the Russian people as having "secret affinities in terms of their sensibility, fatalistic outlook and taste for the tragic", which links them to the people of Latin America.

It is perhaps in these affinities that we should look for an explanation for the extraordinary commotion which the Russian Revolution of 1917 caused in Latin America. It was not by chance that Pablo Neruda and Jorge Amado should have been the first to acquaint the Russians with their wild continent and its tragic beauty and life-enhancing energy. Russian readers were enthralled by Amado's *Terras do Sem-Fin (The Violent Land)* and moved by the exuberant poetry of Neruda's *Canto General*, in whose stanzas the entire history of Latin America unfolds.

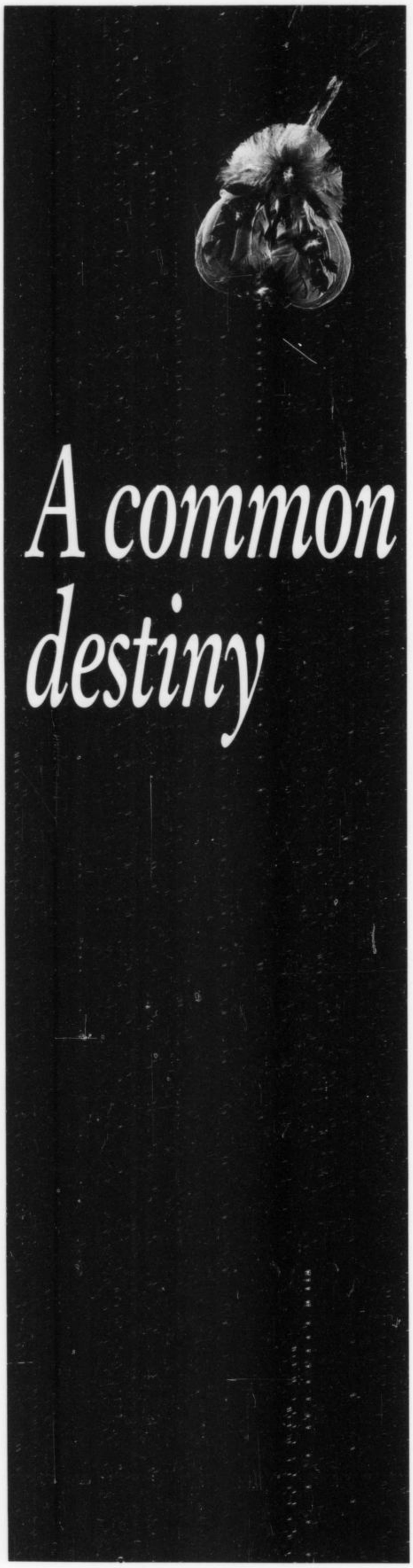
The creative freedom of the new novel, as practised by Alejo Carpentier, Carlos Fuentes, Mario Vargas Llosa, Julio Cortázar and Gabriel García Márquez, was a source of fascination to Soviet writers. Chingiz Aïtmatov said that, after having read García Márquez, he could no longer write in the same way as before. Whereas some fifty years earlier Latin Americans felt a spiritual kinship with the characters of the Russian novel, Russians now see something of themselves reflected in the Latin American novel.

The publication of the Russian translation of *El señor Presidente (The President)* by Miguel Angel Asturias, with its gripping portrait of a small country ground down by dictatorship, alerted us to the machinery of death operated by tyrannical Latin American regimes. In the 1970s, three other novels on the same subject had a resounding success. These were *El Recurso del método* (*Reasons of State*) by Alejo Carpentier, *Yo, el Supremo (I, the Chief)* by Augusto Roa Bastos, and *El Otoño del Patriarca (The Autumn of the Patriarch)* by Gabriel García Márquez. No matter how exotic Russian readers may have found the characters and settings of these novels, they still saw something chillingly familiar in their historical plots and the unfolding of the action.

The Autumn of the Patriarch has been read all over the world, but the Russians were the only ones to shed tears when they recognized the features of the diabolical and insane dictator as those of the totalitarian regime that was trampling them underfoot. Only the Russians—or rather the Soviets—have had to submit to myth-making and mendacity raised to a system of government.

The phenomenal success of García Márquez in our country reminds me of the words of the Russian linguist and literary critic Mikhail Bakhtin, who claimed that "a culture only reveals itself in its full magnitude and depth when it is looked at by another culture". He also stressed that dialogue between cultures is the driving force behind the spiritual progress of mankind. This idea is a very topical one for, as humanity approaches the five-hundredth anniversary of the encounter between two worlds, it is at last beginning to realize that the world to which it belongs is actually one and the same. ❐

An illustration for the first chapter of *Eugene Onegin* drawn by Pushkin in a letter written to his brother Lev in November 1824.



THE GUADALAJARA DECLARATION

EXTRACTS

The Heads of State and Government of Argentina, Bolivia, Brazil, Chile, Colombia, Costa Rica, Cuba, Dominican Republic, Ecuador, El Salvador, Guatemala, Honduras, Mexico, Nicaragua, Panama, Paraguay, Peru, Portugal, Spain, Uruguay and Venezuela, meeting in the city of Guadalajara, Mexico, on 18 and 19 July 1991, agreed to issue the following declaration:

We represent a vast body of nations sharing common roots and the rich heritage of a culture that is the product of different peoples, beliefs and races. Five hundred years after the first encounter between us, we are determined, as one of the great geographical areas that make up today's world, to project the strength of our community into the third millennium.

We realize that the convergence we are seeking cannot draw strength only from a common cultural tradition but depends also on our wealth of national origins and their pluralistic expression. Our community is founded on democracy, on respect for human rights and on fundamental freedoms. In this context, the principles of sovereignty and non-intervention are reaffirmed and recognition is given to each people's right to build freely, in peace, stability and justice, its political system and its institutions. . . .

We recognize the immense contribution the indigenous peoples have made to the development and pluralism of our societies and we reiterate our commitment to their economic and social well-being and our obligation to respect their rights and cultural identities. . . .

Above, fan made of feathers (Lima, Peru).

If the present situation persists, ideological bipolarity may give way to a division between the North, rich in capital and technology, and the South, poor and without prospects. To overcome the problem, it is necessary on the one hand to develop effective forms of reciprocity and solidarity and, on the other, to ground them in an ethical plan, guided by social justice and freedom and offering new patterns that will spur genuine co-operation among the countries of the world. . . .

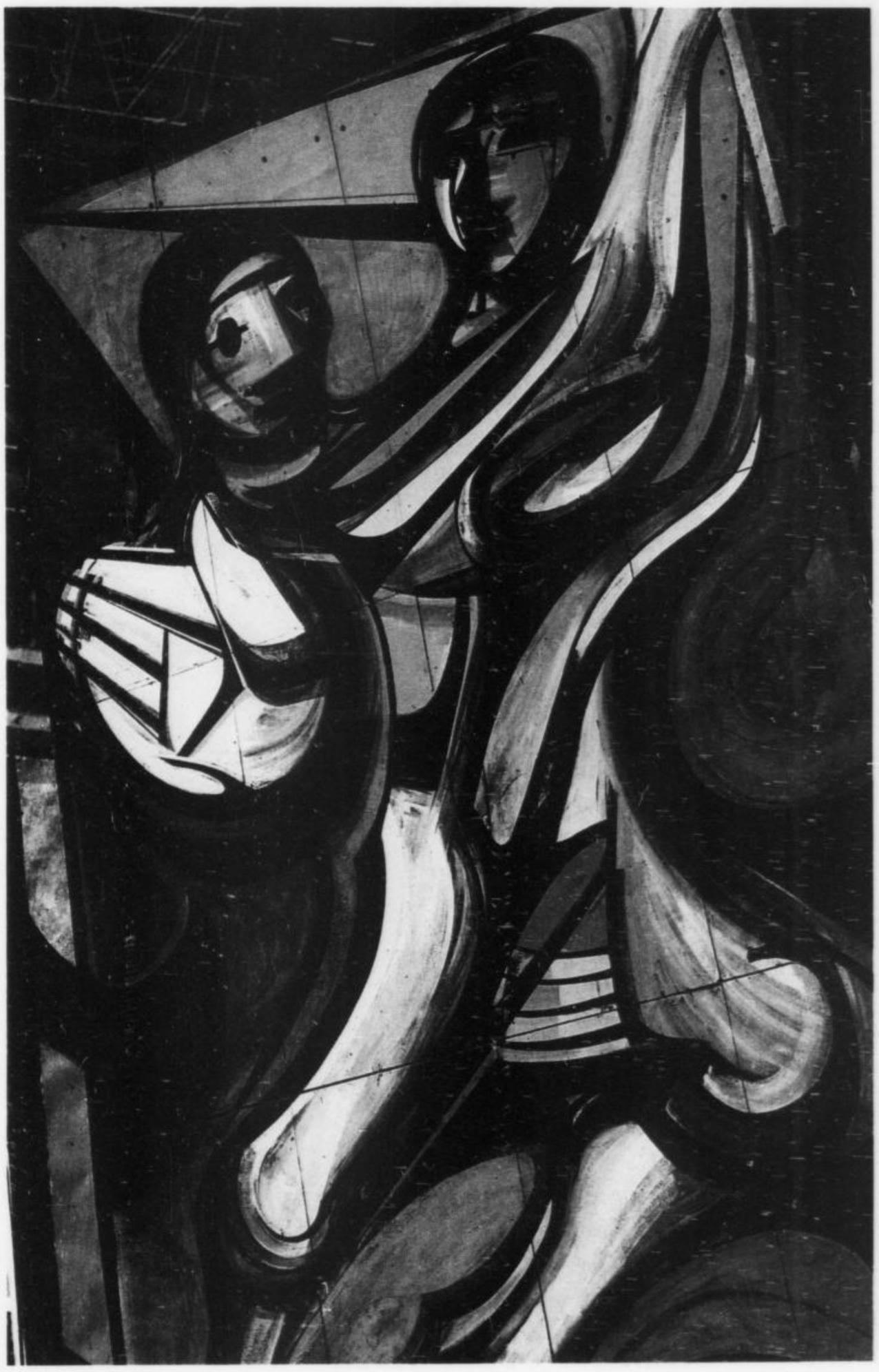
Faced with world-wide ecological deterioration, closely linked to the development models that have thus far prevailed, primarily in the industrialized countries, we call for action to renew multilateral co-operation. That will be the means of stopping the ecological deterioration and overcoming poverty. It is imperative, through this kind of international co-operation, to establish effective procedures for transferring more funds and appropriate technology to the developing countries on preferential, non-commercial terms, bearing in mind that the responsibility for a solution should fall basically to those who are doing the most damage. . . .

In the face of poverty, war, intolerance, famine, illness, environmental degradation and ignorance, we propose a new culture of international co-operation as the only path to a just and stable world. We understand this to mean genuine, concerted action which takes account of the common interests and objectives of the Ibero-American nations and which goes beyond mere give-and-take relations. . . .

Only an international community governed by law can ensure peace and security for all peoples. The United Nations will have an essential role to play in that area—a revitalized and renewed United Nations whose attainment of the goals for which it was created should be facilitated by the new international situation.

The strengthening of the bases of international coexistence and justice in conformity with the purposes and principles of the Charter of the United Nations is a responsibility which must be shared by all states; it is not the exclusive prerogative of a few. That process should be open to universal participation and should uphold the interests of the international community as a whole. We are resolved to make our contribution. . . .

In order to achieve the above-mentioned objectives, we have decided to institute a dialogue among the countries of Ibero-America at the highest level. The Heads of State and Government, meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico, have decided to establish the Ibero-American Conference of Heads of State and Government consisting of the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking sovereign states of America and Europe. To that end we shall meet initially in Spain next year, in Brazil in 1993, in Colombia in 1994 and in Argentina in 1995. These meetings will enable us to embark on a political, economic and cultural process which will help our countries together to achieve greater and more efficient integration in a changing global context. ❐



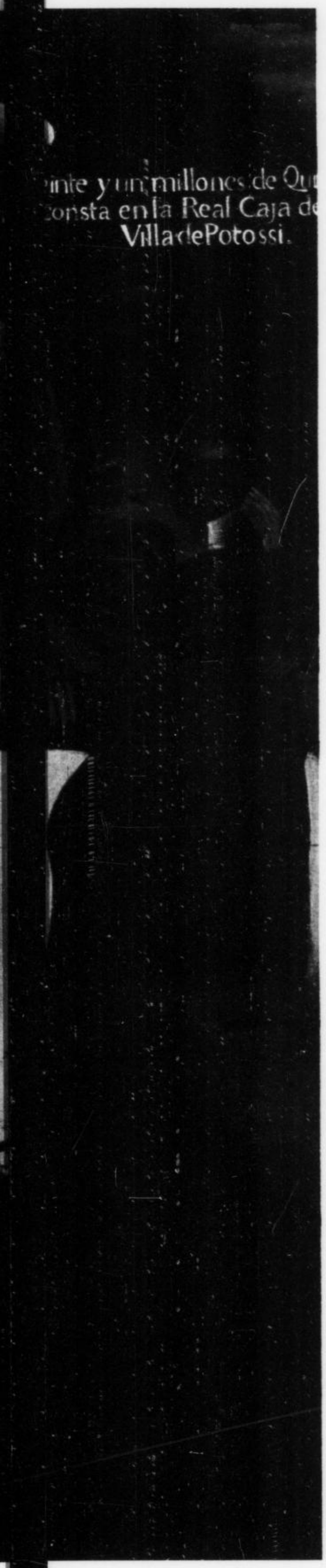
***The March of Humanity in Latin America* (1972), detail of a mural by the Mexican painter David Alfaro Siqueiros.**

THE BIRTH OF THE MODERN AGE

BY EDGAR MONTIEL

1492 ushered in radical changes in ways of thinking and the emergence of a new conception of humanity

Anonymous mid-17th-century drawing of a prosperous miner from the royal city of Potosí (in present-day Bolivia). Silver from the mines of Potosí was one of the mainstays of Spanish power in the 16th century.



THE *Letters of Amerigo Vespucci* were published at a time—early in the sixteenth century—when printing was becoming widespread in Europe, making it possible for ancient Greek and Latin manuscripts to be reproduced and studied for the first time, and thereby ushering in the Renaissance. In them, Vespucci writes of new worlds populated by hitherto unknown beings and creatures, which cast serious doubt on such eminent works as Ptolemy's *Cosmography*, published in Rome in 1478, the *Historia plantarum* of Theophrastus, published in Venice in 1498, and even Aristotle's *Mechanics*.

A vast body of knowledge, painstakingly built up over the centuries, had to be subjected to a searching reappraisal. Many long-held propositions and assumptions turned out to be false, while others were proved correct. Most had to be brought up to date. There was a crisis but at the same time it compelled a radical rethinking, heralding an age that was open to all manner of intellectual curiosity and capable of imagining a universe composed of a variety of differing worlds.

Fresh ways of representing human beings and the world they lived in had to be devised. The humanists began to speak of universality and humanity, a new concept for designating a world inhabited by men and women who were similar yet also different. This idea of humanity marked the beginning of the modern age in the West and gradually imposed a new *imago mundi*.

THE NOBLE SAVAGE

However, these new ideas were by no means accepted by everybody and it was a long time before they gained wide currency. Sceptics in the universities poured scorn on the accounts of the extraordinary discoveries of the Spanish and Portuguese navigators and treated them as baseless figments of their imagination. In 1512, the scholar Alessandro Achillini was still teaching that the Equator was a barren and unpopulated desert region. In 1539, J. Boemus published his *Recueil des diverses histoires des trois parties du monde*, a work whose very title denies the existence of America, although this did not prevent it from being regularly studied and republished until the seventeenth century.

Vespucci's *Letters* were not alone in capturing the imagination of Europeans. The writings of the explorers and conquistadors began to circulate discreetly in the royal courts of Europe, among shipowners and thinkers. Columbus's correspondence with the Catholic Monarchs gave a first-hand word-picture of the peoples of America as being handsome, good-natured, free and uninterested in material things, as though they were living in an age of innocence.

This impression was borne out by Vespucci, when he wrote: "They have no captain to lead them and do not march in step, for every man is his own master. . . . They have no king or chief and they answer to nobody. They live in complete freedom". This first impression of the indigenous peoples of the Caribbean gave rise to the myth of the noble savage, the first European legend about the New World.

This first image of "the Other" had a considerable impact. Rabelais wrote with a mixture of curiosity and admiration of the Indians "who prize a piece of iron more highly than a gold nugget", and the ideas set forth in Montaigne's *Essays* about people with different cultures and customs made a pioneering contribution to comparative anthropology.

It would be possible to speak of two forms of rational thinking or two systems of development, each trying to grasp what the other is saying but constantly getting bogged down in misunderstanding.

The idea of the "natural" condition of the Indian as merely being an extension of the state of nature gave rise to a discriminatory and inegalitarian ideology so influential that it prompted a thinker like Hegel to deny the historical dimension of American man, as though pre-Columbian America belonged to the realm of nature rather than to that of reason.

The myth of the noble savage died hard, although it was soon paralleled by that of Eldorado, whereby America was imagined to be a land of precious gems, the horn of plenty and eternal youth, the garden chosen by Providence to feed the rest of the world.

FROM ELDORADO TO THE BLACK LEGEND

Another myth, known as the black legend, was soon to emerge. Under its seemingly innocuous exterior, the image of Eldorado as a Garden of Eden concealed the grim reality of the large-scale exploitation of the New World's gold and silver mines to fill the coffers of Europe. The French economist and politician Raymond Barre has rightly recalled that this gold was the basis for the commercial power of Europe, brought mercantilism into fashion, and was instrumental in the founding of banks in Lyons, Antwerp, Amsterdam, Frankfurt and Seville, and in the opening of the first stock exchanges. It made possible the extraordinary commercial and entrepreneurial activity which shaped the destiny of Europe. The myth of Eldorado closed people's eyes to the heavy toll of Indian lives that was taken in wresting gold and silver from the bowels of the earth.

In 1533, Father Bartolomé de Las Casas caused a sensation when he published in Seville with the authorization of the King of Spain his celebrated *Apologética historia sumaria (Apologetic History)*, in which he fiercely denounced the abuses perpetrated by the conquistadors. This polemical work, which was approved by those responsible for propagating the black legend, aroused great interest in Europe. It had an enormous influence on humanists, the philosophers of the Enlightenment and the ideologists of the French Revolution.

However, the turn of the century saw the

Frontispiece drawn by Picart le Romain for an 18th-century French translation of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios Reales*.

publication of another book that was to have even greater influence on shaping Europe's image of America. This was the *Comentarios Reales* of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega, which was published in Lisbon in 1609. The feelings of compassion which Las Casas had aroused in his European readers turned to admiration for the culture and society elegantly described by the Inca Garcilaso. In this well-thought-out, methodical and balanced view of the Inca Empire, America is seen in a new light. Garcilaso's *Comentarios* can be said to have left its mark on all the leading European thinkers and writers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries.

THE LAST TESTAMENT

Why was Garcilaso's account so appealing and fascinating to European readers? He was born in Cuzco, the capital of the Inca Empire, in 1539, five years after the city had fallen into Spanish hands. As a high-born *mestizo*—he was the son of an Inca princess and a distinguished Spanish captain—from early childhood he was taught Latin and given a literary and scientific education. Yet at the same time, he was well placed to witness the tragic collapse of the Inca Empire. Every evening he listened spell-bound to the stories recounted by the members of his mother's family about the glories of the Inca past and he attended some of the ritual ceremonies that had survived the Spanish conquest. When he was twenty-one, he travelled to Spain to complete his studies and claim his hereditary rights. He then embarked on a military and literary career. On retiring to Montilla and subsequently to Córdoba, he spent his time reading the Greek classics and Roman historians and took a keen interest in agriculture, music and architecture. He closely followed the publication of the chronicles of the Indies, in which he found many errors and misrepresentations, and resolved to write the

EDGAR MONTIEL, of Peru, is one of the new generation of Latin American writers and thinkers. His recent publications include: *Inca Garcilaso. Identidad de la historia* (1990; "The Inca Garcilaso. Identity of History"), *Barro pensativo. Signos de la cultura peruana* (1990; "Thinking Clay. Signs of Peruvian Culture") and (in press) *Negros en Sudamérica. De la conquista a la identidad nacional* ("The Blacks in South America. From the Conquest to National Identity").

Comentarios to correct the accounts of earlier writers and to "clarify and elaborate on many things of which they had barely begun to speak or had left unsaid".

He therefore embarked on the daunting task of historical reconstruction in order to demonstrate to the Spanish and Europeans that the Incas "were civilized and not barbarians" and to dissuade Spain from using the force of arms to rule a nation which had already suffered military defeat and whose outstanding culture deserved to be treated with proper consideration.

After the Spanish edition had first appeared in 1609, translations were published in French (1633), English (1688) and Dutch (1705). These were followed by many later editions, including an abridged version in French in 1744, complete with copious annotations and commentaries by leading scholars and travellers of the Enlightenment. A learned and rewarding dialogue took place symbolically between the Inca Garcilaso and La Condamine, Godin, Frézier and many others.

Garcilaso introduced Europe to the Inca Empire, with its unbending social organization, its collective agrarian system and strict monotheism, and its achievements in agriculture, irrigation, architecture, urban development, the domestication of plants and animals, and the fastidious workmanship of its jewellery and woven fabrics.

This picture he painted of a planned egalitarian society, coming under the authority of an all-powerful State, was a source of wonder to the utopian thinkers and reformers of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. Europe, in its thirst for social justice and reform, saw Inca society as proof that a different form of society was possible and that the redistribution of goods and wealth was not an unattainable dream. The "New World" had succeeded in forging a new relationship between people, nature and the state.

FROM REFLECTION TO REALITY

The view of the Incas presented by Garcilaso can be found in Campanella, in Bacon and in Morelly, the French utopian thinker whose *Code la Nature* (1753) was to influence the thinkers of the French Revolution and the utopian socialists of the nineteenth century. Garcilaso also left a mark on Montesquieu, Voltaire (whose play *Alzire* is set in Peru), Rousseau, Marmontel (who wrote a historical novel drawing heavily on the work of Las Casas and the Inca Garcilaso) and Rameau (the composer of the famous opera-ballet *Les Indes galantes).* All these philosophers, moralists, political thinkers, artists, poets and musicians, whether they were monarchists or members of the bourgeoisie, found in the Incas and their social organization a source of inspiration or a means of giving voice to their own aspirations. The "Other" was no longer a mere reflection of their own image but had become an intrinsic part of the European vision.

On the eve of the French Revolution, the Academy of Lyons held an essay competition on the resolutely universalist subject of "The influence of the discovery of America on the happiness of the human race". Many of the essays submitted reflected the teachings of Garcilaso, especially that of the winner, the Abbé Genty, which set him at the heart of the debate that triggered off the Revolution. Genty considered that collective ownership had made the Incas a contented people, but that the lack of any form of private property had sapped their social structure and had ultimately led to the collapse of their empire.

And so America, that "other" world whose peoples, landscapes and culture were all so different, found itself in the midst of another historical process, the French Revolution, which in turn sent to America its own universalist message embodying innovative ideas drawn from Las Casas and Garcilaso. The wheel had come full circle and was starting to turn again. ❐

num copia ſalubritate admixta bominũ : quæ niſi quis viderit:credulitatem ſuperat . Huius arbores paſcua & fructus / multũ ab illis Iohanę differũt . Hæc præterea Hiſpana diuerſo aromatis genere / auro metallíſq; abundat.cuius quidem & omnium aliarum quas ego vidi : & quarum cognitionem baheo incolę vtriuſq; ſexus :nudi ſemp incedunt :

The arrival of Christopher Columbus in the Antilles. An engraving from the 1493 Latin edition of the first letter sent by the navigator to the Catholic Monarchs on his return from his first great voyage.

THE INVENTION OF A CULTURE

BY LEOPOLDO ZEA

Five centuries since the shock of conquest have seen the creation of an American identity based on racial and cultural intermingling

DISCOVERY? Encounter? Conquest? Colonization? Many more such words could be cited, but the one people choose will depend on their point of view. For Europe the event to which they refer was an expression of its need to project itself outward by imagining utopian worlds. Columbus's voyage brought such worlds into the realm of the possible. As Fernand Braudel put it, America is the invention of Europe: "Did it not discover and invent America and celebrate Columbus's voyage as the greatest historical event since the Creation? . . . Europe patiently created America in an image and a likeness that gave substance to its desires."[1]

America was the realization of the utopias of More, Bacon, Campanella and many others. Europe reborn projected itself into the world Columbus discovered. The most complete expression of this phenomenon was North America, the United States, where the European peoples' dreams of freedom became reality. There, it is easy for Europe not only to commemorate but to rejoice in the realization of long-felt aspirations: Europe and North America can celebrate their own specific universalization in history.

The process of conquest and colonization initiated by Columbus in 1492 was something quite different. The region in which it took place was something more than vast open spaces inhabited by wandering tribes. Unlike the Puritans who arrived later on the *Mayflower,* the men who followed Columbus found themselves face to face with people whose cultures were different from their own and changed their view of the world. This was why it was necessary not only to enslave the bodies of these people but to take possession of their souls. The Puritans who settled the prairies of North America felt no such need to impose their culture, religion and habits on those whom they regarded as unconcerned by such matters. Thus there were two quite different forms of expansion: one involved the conquest of bodies and souls while the other was content to domesticate the natural resources of a new world and the people living there, who were regarded as part of Nature.

The Iberian expansion initiated by Columbus was a response to mercantile considerations, but it also reflected an obligation to preach the Gospel. Had Columbus met the Great Khan of Cathay, he would certainly have attempted to convert his subjects to Christianity. Unlike its counterpart in North America, the Iberian conquest set out not only to amass wealth but to save souls. There was greed on both sides, but in a bid to curb the greed of the Spanish, the missionaries set out to understand the peoples they encountered and wanted to welcome them into the bosom of Christianity.

Since they wished to conquer souls, they first had to destroy the heathen cultures imposed by the devil, or at least push them out of sight. They organized mass baptisms, although these ran counter to the views held by Father Bartolomé de Las Casas (1474-1566), who argued that the indigenous peoples were capable of rational thought and should first be intellectually convinced of the truth of Chris-

Above, an aerial photo of a portrait of an American Indian "drawn" in earth near Oskaloosa, Kansas, by US artist Stan Herd using ploughs, tractors, mowers and other farm implements to give an impression of relief. The head, traced in a field of corn stubble, measures about 300 metres from the top of the headdress to the neckerchief.

1. Fernand Braudel, *Civilization and Capitalism: 15th-18th century.* 1967

tianity. In order to save their souls, a "just war" would be waged against them, and they would pay the price by serving masters who would have been justified in exterminating them because of their barbarity. As Juan Ginés de Sepúlveda (1490-1573) said: "What fate could be more fitting for these barbarians than to be the subjects of an empire whose qualities of prudence and uprightness can make civilized people of them?" What should they give in exchange? It was only right, he continued, that "they should pay for the endeavours devoted to redeeming them by working for the masters to whom they had been entrusted." Bartolomé de Las Casas and other missionaries denounced the falsity of this argument and the genocide perpetrated in its name.

It was no mere coincidence that two far-reaching historical events—the fall of Granada and the discovery of America—should have both occurred in 1492. The surrender of Granada marked the completion of the reconquest of Spain and the end of Arab dominion, which dated back to the year 711. Those eight centuries of dominion taught the inhabitants of the peninsula to live side by side with other races and civilizations and produced the men who were to spread far and wide through the unknown continent. In spite of arrogance, greed, and the atrocities that, incidentally, the Spanish themselves were the first to condemn, there would be racial intermingling in the New World.

During the colonial period, the Spanish attempted to impose their culture on the vanquished peoples, but the latter turned the tables on their conquerors through countless forms of cultural and racial cross-fertilization. African peoples uprooted from their homes to perform the thankless work that had decimated the original population would later contribute their blood and their cultures to those of Ibero-America. Later still, other peoples and cultures would come to be added to this gigantic melting pot.

In this year of 1992, five hundred years after Columbus's exploit, America is not commemorating an event that marked the beginning of its servitude but its significance in shaping the continent's special identity. Latin America cannot repudiate its past, for there was a clash of cultures between the conquerors and the conquered. But there was also coexistence and give and take. As José Vasconcelos put it: "It is in the mingling of blood and cultures that we must look for the true features of our individuality." ❐

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Mexican philosopher and essayist, is professor of the philosophy of history and the history of ideas at the National Autonomous University of Mexico. His many works on the culture and history of Latin America have been translated and published in several languages. They include: *América en la historia* (1957; "America's Place in History"), *El pensamiento latinoaméricano* (1976; "Latin American Thought") and *Latinoamérica, tercer mundo* (1977; "Latin America, the Third World"). See also the interview with prof. Zea published in the November 1990 edition of the UNESCO Courier.

FIVE HUNDRED

THIS is a year of great historical significance, since it enables us to look back and take stock of a remarkable series of events which took place 500 years ago. The passage of time has brought a new perspective on these events, the effects of which can now be fully appreciated. The capture of Granada on 2 January 1492 by the *Reyes Católicos*—the "Catholic Monarchs" as Ferdinand and Isabella were known—had a European-wide impact. Spain had abstained from taking part in the Crusades and had instead devoted its energies to its own reunification. When engaged on research in the archives of Genoa, I came across a decree signed by the Doge of that maritime republic ordering that the taking of Granada should be celebrated not only with the usual artillery salute but with a three-day holiday. On 31 March the Edict expelling the Jews was signed. And Spain, the melting pot of European and Mediterranean cultures which she transmitted to the western hemisphere, has the privilege of having been named by Arabs and Jews in their own languages as *Al-Andalus* and *Sefarad*, respectively.

Had these two historical events, with their far-reaching geographical and political consequences, not taken place, Christopher Columbus would probably have not been able to secure the signature by the King and Queen on 17 April 1492 of the *Capitulaciones de Santa Fe*, that extraordinary contract (or so it seems today), between a government and a private individual who demanded advance recognition of his rights to something which no-one yet knew existed. Without this agreement, Christopher Columbus and the Pinzón brothers would not have been able to fit out the three vessels in which they set sail from Palos, in Huelva province, on 2 August and lost sight of land off La Gomera, in the Canary Islands, on 9 September.

In his letter of 15 February 1493 to the Catholic Kings, Columbus reported that, after thirty-three days' sailing, he had made landfall on the previous 12 October, the date that has since been regarded as that of the birth of a New World through the encounter between the indigenous peoples of America and voyagers from the old continent. Apparently, however, Columbus's discovery did not make the same impact as the capture of Granada: in the Genoese archives I was unable to find any trace of a reaction to his exploit, although the letter describing it had circulated widely in Europe. Of course this does not necessarily mean that the event had not been reported, especially in view of the relations that then existed between Genoa and Barcelona, where the Catholic Kings received Columbus on his return to the peninsula after his first great voyage.

Little must have been known in Genoa of the approaches made to European monarchs by Columbus, who, it is true, had more links with Portugal than with his native city. How different was the impact of the letter sent later to Florence by Amerigo Vespucci, then in the service of Spain, which was so considerable that the name of the Florentine navigator would be given to the newly-discovered lands. Columbus had little influence on the political life of the Republic of Genoa, where he was only remembered many years later.

A GRAMMAR FOR AN EMPIRE

It would scarcely have been possible for Columbus's caravels to have taken with them the "Grammar of the Castilian language" which Elio Antonio de Nebrija published at Salamanca on 18 August. The date is worth mentioning, because if Nebrija thought that a language can play a role in strengthening an Empire, he was of course thinking of the Holy Roman Empire and certainly not of the Spanish Empire, which did not then exist.

It is also sometimes forgotten that Nebrija's monumental work, the fruit of many years' study, was on a language that had already existed for 500 years. Today, fortunately, the language has ceased to be an instrument of domination and has become a vehicle of international co-operation and solidarity. This year, Spanish-speakers will have the satisfaction of seeing their age-old language being used for the first time officially at a World Fair, EXPO 92 at Seville, a city dear to the heart of Nebrija.

If the modern communications media had existed at that time, what account might have come down to us of the events of 1492, that *annus mirabilis* which saw Spain transformed into a modern nation-state like France and England, if only because the political union concluded between Castile and Aragon was extended to lands whose size and importance were still unknown, and were seen in terms of a logic specific to Europe at that time which nothing seemed likely to contradict. It would have been fascinating to know how the Taino Indians reacted to their discovery of Columbus and to the arrival of men whose apparel and customs were so unlike theirs.

Of all these events, and the many others that occurred in Europe in the same year, the discovery of a new continent was to have the greatest geographical, scientific and historical impact. As Seneca had predicted, Thule would no longer mark the end of the Earth. The European countries with an Atlantic seaboard began to compete with each other overseas. Spain and Portugal would carve up much of the New World between them, and England and France would contend with each other for the north of the continent. Curiously, these voyages of discovery, which were prompted by political and, later, by economic imperatives, did not all have the same impact on Europe. Much time would elapse before historical and geographical atlases took full account of the Portuguese and Spanish voyages of exploration. Columbus's landing on the island of Guahaní was profoundly important, but the dreaded crossing of the African Equator was no less so. It is accepted today that 1492 can only be seen in the context of the maritime expansion of the Iberian peoples in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries, a process whose effects were so far-reaching that they can still be felt five centuries later. One need only think of the exhibition UNESCO organized last spring on the theme of "The Encounter between

YEARS FROM NOW

By Félix Fernández-Shaw

Two Worlds in the Written Word," in which over a thousand recently published volumes in many languages were presented to mark the fifth centenary.

To the best of my knowledge this encounter was commemorated for the first time on its fourth centenary. On that occasion the Uruguayan Minister Plenipoteniary, Zorrilla de San Martín, speaking in the name of the Ibero-American diplomatic corps as a whole, made a speech at Palos which is still remembered. At the same time the important *Raccolta colombina* was appearing in Italy, while in the United States too, on the initiative of Italians, the anniversary of 12 October 1492 was celebrated for the first time. Today the time is ripe to make an assessment of all the studies that have been published on the subject, including a number of documents that have recently come to light, and to relate them to the age in which we live. It is both constructive and necessary to examine certain aspects of history more closely.

In my opinion, however, it would be wrong to dwell exclusively on what has happened between then and now. I feel that we should also think about the future and ask ourselves how future generations will judge us in 500 years' time. Shall we have been capable of taking the giant strides needed for history and humanity to move ahead, or shall we have clung to our old ways, forgetting that they can only remain valid if they are geared to the future—and thus have fallen victim to a historicist narcissism which it is hard to excuse?

For the history of international relations no event has ever been so rich in consequences as the encounter between two worlds. Christopher Columbus used the word "discovery" in his letter to the Catholic Kings and it has been accepted ever since as being perfectly normal by generations of teachers and students on both sides of the Atlantic.

From discovery to encounter

Since that time perceptions of the world have changed, as can be seen from the fact that one feature of this fifth centenary is a preoccupation with the "Other". In the context of an age dominated by communication it is essential to listen to and respect the "Other". The encounter between two worlds is a fact that cannot be denied. It is clearly something that transcends the notion of *discovery* which (whether we are thinking in terms of geography, biology or chemistry) is invariably associated with a specific date, and needs to be complemented by the more timeless concept of *encounter*, which implies a continuing process. On the eve of the third millennium, this is a concept that is attractive to all concerned, since it expresses a common desire for unity and integration that, with all due respect to minorities and their past, opens the way to dialogue and harmony.

The word *discovery* gives prominence to the heroes of the enterprise; the word *encounter* gives more emphasis to the peoples who actually "encountered" each other and gave substance to a New World. Whereas *discovery* marks a happening, an event, *encounter* conveys better the idea of the political journey that has brought us to the reality of today, spanning the five hundred years since 1492.

As I have written elsewhere: "Every commemoration has both an historical and a political meaning. It is not enough simply to recall an event, all its implications must also be thrown into relief, since, generally speaking, we remember only what is important. We always associate an event with a date for this is how we pass it on to the next generation. A commemoration is a historical act since it forms part of a chain of events. These historical and political milestones are valuable because they relate the present to both the past and the future." It was inevitable that history written from a Eurocentric standpoint should speak in terms of *discovery* and it is equally inevitable that, as history has now come to be seen in universal terms, we should have adopted so evocative a term as *encounter*.

What legacy shall we hand down to the generation living five hundred years from now? What progress will have been made between now and then to understanding how people live and what their aspirations are? What contribution will those who celebrate the sixth, seventh or eighth centenaries make to the complex pattern of historical and political developments? Will the attempts made today to achieve a better understanding of the events of 1492 be of any interest five centuries hence? Take as an example my own country in which it took so much effort and such great sacrifice to restore democracy and to work out a Constitution that would bring all Spaniards together. Who would have thought that, before 1992, Spain would have altered its political and historical dimension by espousing the cause of a European Community, or that, on 1 January 1993, she will turn the page on ancient rivalries? Who would have thought that in July 1991, for the first time in their common history, the Heads of State and of Government of the Spanish- and Portuguese-speaking countries would hold an Ibero-American summit conference at Guadalajara, Mexico? Who would have thought that, before the end of 1991, Arabs and Jews would meet in Madrid for a peace conference and would return after so many years, to discuss their problems on soil once so familiar to them?

Some anniversaries cannot be overlooked, for they form part and parcel of the history of peoples. Even so, we should take advantage of them to bring the event being commemorated into sharper focus against its particular political and social background. For myself, I should prefer to be thinking of the 500 years that lie ahead. We must go forward with a greater awareness of the past but in the full knowledge that we in the present have to look to the future. The anniversary of 1492 will come round again in a hundred years' time and it will again be imperative to take stock, for history constantly has to be rewritten. It is up to us to ensure that the event is an ever-richer source of hope. The year 1992 can only make sense if we find in it a justification for the future. ❐

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UNESCO'S FIRST 45 YEARS (PART VIII)

by Michel Conil Lacoste

1989

General policy

■ October-November: At its twenty-fifth session, the General Conference approves a budget of $378,800,000 for 1990-1991. It also adopts the Third Medium-Term Plan (1990-1995) whose structure "aims at strengthening the interdisciplinary and inter-sectoral approach to the action of the Organization".

Education

■ February: The Director-General launches the Regional Programme for the Universalization and Renewal of Primary Education and the Eradication of Adult Illiteracy in the Arab States (ARABUPEAL).

■ 4-6 September: UNESCO hosts the annual Inter-Agency Meeting on Co-ordination of the Activities of the Organizations of the United Nations System in Matters of International Drug Abuse Control, attended by UNESCO, the World Health Organization (WHO), the Food and Agriculture Organization (FAO), the International Labour Organisation (ILO), the World Bank and other agencies. The three main items on the agenda are the availability of international funds, preventive education and co-ordination.

■ 6 December: International Literacy Year—1990 is officially launched in New York, in the presence of the Secretary-General of the United Nations. The Year is being prepared by 107 National Committees.

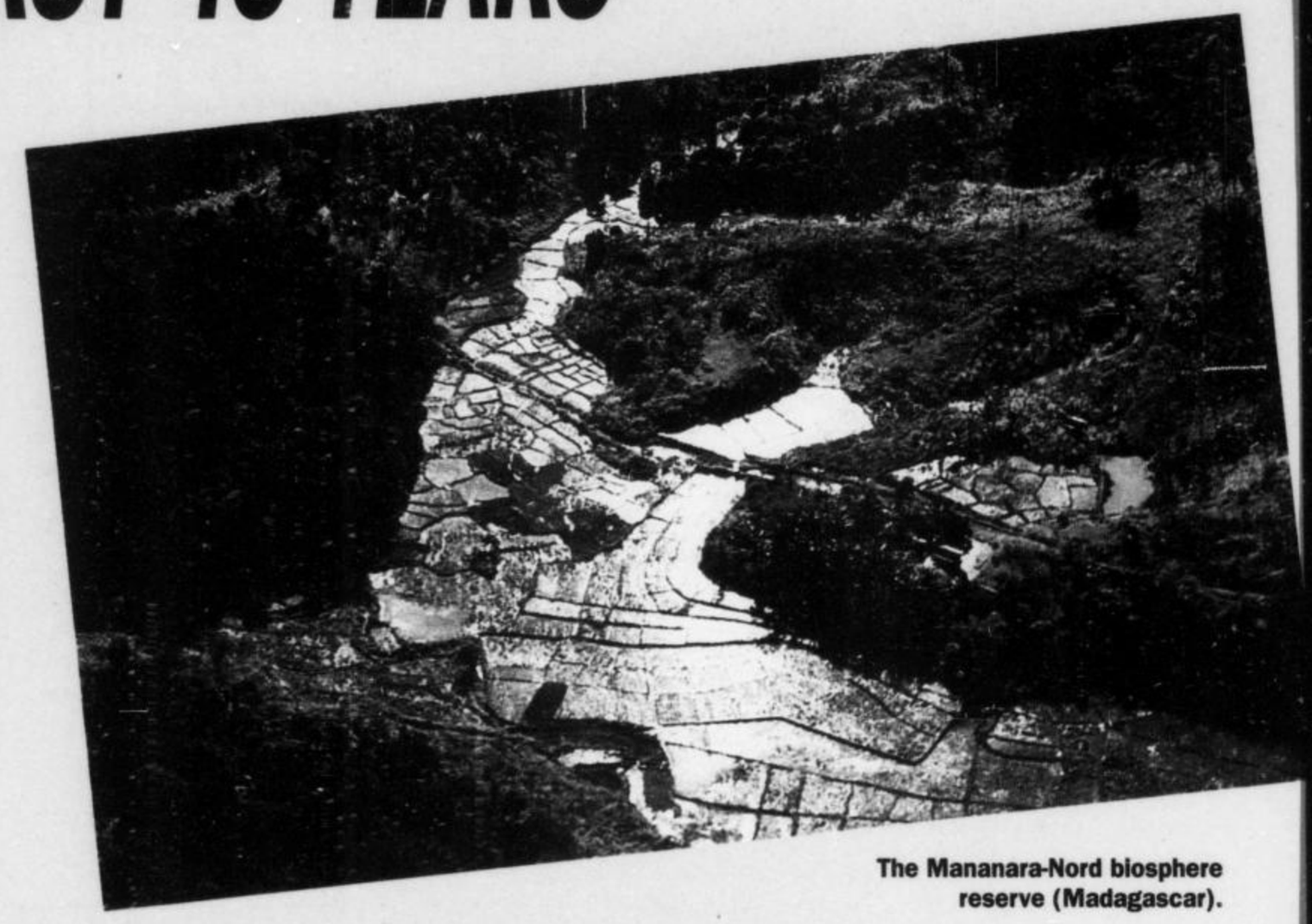
Exact and natural sciences

■ With the support of the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and the Federal Republic of Germany, Madagascar sets up its first biosphere reserve at Mananara-Nord, to provide long-term protection for an exceptionally wide variety of plant and animal life.

Social and human sciences

■ June-July: The International Congress on Peace in the Minds of Men is held at the Headquarters of the Houphouët-Boigny International Foundation for Peace at Yamoussoukro (Côte d'Ivoire). One of the main issues discussed is the link between peace education and people's responsibility for their environment.

■ September: An International Symposium on the access of women to salaried employment is held in collaboration with Hacettepe University in Ankara (Turkey).



The Mananara-Nord biosphere reserve (Madagascar).

SAFEGUARDING FOLKLORE

Culture

■ November: The General Conference adopts the Recommendation on the Safeguarding of Traditional Culture and Folklore, the first international legal instrument of its kind to include folklore.

■ December: An International Symposium on Illicit Traffic and Theft of Works of Art and Cultural Property is held at the Headquarters of INTERPOL in Lyons (France). UNESCO has co-operated with INTERPOL for many years.

■ In 1988-1989, 68 Member States benefit from UNESCO's book promotion activities. With UNESCO's assistance, more than 20 training courses for people working in the book industry are organized in all the world regions.

■ UNESCO launches its 16th travelling exhibition of reproductions of works of art, on Buddhist art.

Communication

■ March: The Ministers of Information of Latin America hold a meeting in Quito (Ecuador) on the future of public broadcasting services in the region.

NEWS AGENCY DEVELOPMENT

■ May: UNESCO and the Federal Republic of Germany take part in a joint evaluation mission to 6 of the 13 countries covered by the West Africa News Agencies Development (WANAD) project. The FRG decides to allocate $4 million to the project, notably to equip the agencies with computer facilities.

■ November: Under UNESCO auspices, the Asian Pacific Broadcasting Union and the South Pacific Union hold a regional seminar in Suva (Fiji) on the introduction of television in the Pacific islands and the promotion of nationally produced programmes.

Intersectoral activities

■ November: The General Conference adopts a new intersectoral and inter-agency project on "The young child and the family environment", in co-operation with the United Nations Children's Fund (UNICEF) and other organizations. The project's four priority areas are nutrition and early childhood stimulation; parent/child/family interactions; childhood disabilities; and preschool education.

■ *Sources*, a new illustrated monthly magazine, is created by UNESCO. Published in English, French, Spanish and Portuguese, its goal is to show UNESCO at work and make the Organization better known to the general public.

Events

■ January: The "Music and Musicians of the World" series of recordings, which forms part of the UNESCO Collection of Traditional Music, is awarded the Grand Prix of the Académie du disque français.

■ June: At a ceremony in Manila (Philippines), the first UNESCO Architecture and Landscape Architecture Prize is awarded to two teams from the University of Trigakti, Jakarta (Indonesia), for their projects to rehabilitate a run-down housing area.

■ 10 October: Addressing UNESCO's Executive Board in Paris, Willy Brandt analyses the reasons for what he calls the "waning of the North-South dialogue". He advocates a "serious review of the United Nations system" and suggests that a "kind of Secu-

rity Council" be created to deal with "global environmental and developmental matters".
■ November: An exhibition on the life and work of Jawaharlal Nehru is held in Paris on the occasion of the 100th anniversary of his birth.
■ November: At the Institute of the Arab World in Paris, the UNESCO-International Music Council Prize is awarded to the Iraqi musicologist and performer Munir Bachir and to the Fédération internationale des jeunesses musicales.

THE RIGHTS OF THE CHILD

■ 6 December: Following the adoption of the Convention on the Rights of the Child by the United Nations, young people play a leading part at a ceremony organized at UNESCO Headquarters to celebrate the 30th anniversary of the Declaration of the Rights of the Child, the first standard-setting instrument adopted in this field and now supplemented and strengthened by the Convention.

1990

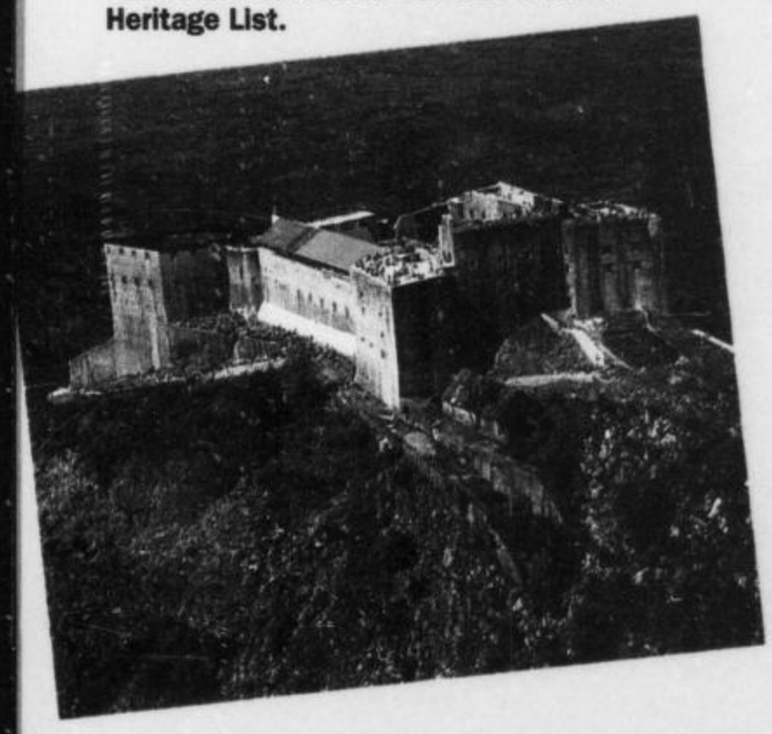
General policy

■ March: The first collective consultation of Non-governmental organizations (NGOs) in Latin America and the Caribbean takes place in Quito (Ecuador). UNESCO currently maintains official relations with 585 NGOs throughout the world.
■ In the 11 years from 1978, when it was established, to 1989, the Committee on Conventions and Recommendations, which is an organ of UNESCO's Executive Board with responsibility for dealing with cases of violations of human rights in UNESCO's fields of competence, has received 355 communications calling for its intervention.

Education

■ 5-9 March: The World Conference on Education for All, jointly convened by UNICEF, UNDP, UNESCO and the World Bank and prepared by means of a series of regional and international consultations, is held at Jomtien (Thailand) and is attended by 1,500 participants. The main United Nations agencies involved promise to step up their contributions in the coming years. The Conference also notes that an enormous volume of funds could be made available by cutting back arms expenditure.
■ March: An International Congress on the Planning and Management of Educational Development is held in Mexico City, with the participation of the International Institute for Educational Planning (IIEP).
■ April: A World Ministerial Summit to Reduce Demand for Drugs is held in London. The participants agree on UNESCO's key role in promoting education for the prevention of drug abuse.
■ April: A World Consultation of Teachers' Organizations on education for AIDS prevention is organized by UNESCO in co-operation with WHO, ILO and four international teachers' organizations and held at UNESCO Headquarters. It is attended by 400 participants.

The Citadelle de La Ferrière (Haïti), a site which has been included on UNESCO's World Heritage List.



ENVIRONMENT-FRIENDLY MICROBES

Exact and natural sciences

■ September: In collaboration with UNESCO's MIRCEN (Microbiological Resources Centres) network, the University of Montreal hosts a symposium which examines the contribution of biotechnologies to environmental management and conservation through microbial mechanisms. The MIRCEN network was established by UNESCO in 1975 and comprises 24 Centres in 19 countries.
■ October-November: Meeting in Geneva, the Second World Climate Conference, with which UNESCO is associated through its environmental programmes, and especially the activities of the Intergovernmental Oceanographic Commission (IOC), recommends the negotiation of an International Convention on the Climate.
■ November: An intergovernmental meeting on the issues raised by biological diversity is held in Nairobi. The establishment of an international standard-setting instrument is envisaged.
■ At UNESCO Headquarters, more than 150 hydrologists from all over the world celebrate 25 years of international co-operation in their discipline.
■ As part of a project being carried out by UNESCO and the International Union of Geological Sciences (IUGS), the first international conference on the use of expert systems for quantitative modelling of mineral deposits is organized in co-operation with the Geological Survey of Canada, and other organizations. These techniques have far-reaching implications for developing countries, where they will make it possible to optimalize the prospection and extraction of mineral resources.
■ February and November: The governing bodies of the Man and the Biosphere Programme approve the designation of 17 new biosphere reserves.

Social and human sciences

■ March: The Second Festival of Fez is held on the theme of "Arab women and creativity: women and writing". The Festival has been organized by the municipality of Fez with UNESCO support since 1989. The theme chosen for 1991 is "Women and image".
■ An urban rehabilitation programme gets under way in the town of Ngaoundere (Cameroon). A team of young community organizers has been formed to help the inhabitants of an area on the outskirts of the town to build or improve their homes.

S.O.S. ANGKOR

Culture

■ April: An expert mission is sent to Giza (Egypt) to examine the flaking stonework of the Great Sphinx by means of ultrasonic equipment. Following the Director-General's visit to the monument in 1988, UNESCO made a grant of $100,000 towards the cost of the work.
■ June: The first round table of experts for the preservation of the monuments of Angkor lays the groundwork for co-ordinated action to protect the site.
■ Ten years after the campaign to preserve the Citadelle de La Ferrière (Haiti) was launched, work on the site is completed.
■ October: The UNESCO Crafts Prize is awarded for the first time at a Crafts Fair held in Ouagadougou (Burkina Faso). It goes to the Ivorian artist Sangho Oumou for her jewellery designs and to two other prize-winners, from Niger and Burkina Faso respectively.
■ The General Conference adopts a Resolution establishing a World Day for Cultural Development, to be celebrated each year on 21 May.
■ General History of Africa: Volume III of the French edition, *L'Afrique du VII^e au XI^e siècle,* co-published by UNESCO and Nouvelles Editions Africaines, appears, along with the abridged versions of Volumes II and VII of the English edition.

Communication

■ 27-28 February: an informal meeting of journalists representing the new media of Eastern Europe and leading figures from the press of Western Europe, the United States and Canada is held at UNESCO Headquarters. The meeting, organized by UNESCO, enables the representatives of the East European written press to indicate their needs in terms of training, equipment and legal and financial aid at a time when democratically elected régimes are being established in their countries.
■ April: The International Radio and Television University (IRTU) and UNESCO's Office of Public Information bring together senior officials of the main radio and television broadcasting organizations of Eastern and Western Europe, in order to identify their most urgent needs and study practical ways and means of fostering co-operation between the audiovisual media throughout the continent.
■ The programme for news agency development in Africa is extended to two other regions of the continent. Thirteen countries of southern Africa and ten countries of central

Africa are covered by two projects, one for South-East Africa News Agencies Development (SEANAD), the other for Central Africa News Agencies Development (CANAD), with the support of funds-in-trust from Germany.
■ April: In Bucharest, the Director-General launches an appeal on behalf of the rebuilding of the city's Central University Library.

SAILING THE SILK ROADS

Intersectoral activities

■ An expert meeting on "The view of the other and the first intercultural contacts" is held as part of a "Series of Encounters commemorating the Fifth Centenary of the Encounter between Two Worlds".
■ July-August: UNESCO's Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue enters its operational phase. Two scientific expeditions take place: the first, in July and August 1990, covers 10,000 kilometres along the desert route in China, from Xian to Kashgar and back via Urumqi; the second, from October 1990 to March 1991, sails 27,500 kilometres from Venice to Osaka, stopping at 21 ports in 16 countries.
■ The World Heritage Committee, meeting in Banff, Alberta (Canada), includes the island of Delos (Greece), the natural reserve of Taingy de Bemaraha (Madagascar), San Gimignano (Italy) and the Kremlin and Red Square in Moscow among 17 newly-chosen sites and monuments placed on the World Heritage List.

Events

■ 20-21 January: Almost 100,000 books are collected in a Books for Romania Operation promoted by UNESCO and the PEN Club.
■ 7 June: Nelson Mandela is given a standing ovation at UNESCO Headquarters. The day ends with a recital by the American soprano Grace Bumbry, organized in collaboration with the Danielle Mitterrand "France Libertés" Foundation and coinciding with the publication of a number of the *UNESCO Courier* entitled "Winds of Freedom".
■ June: The Simón Bolívar International Prize is awarded to Vaclav Havel. The Jury, meeting at UNESCO Headquarters, wishes by its choice of laureate to honour "a struggle which goes far beyond the borders of his country to become universal in scope".
■ 10 December: Vaclav Havel is awarded the UNESCO Prize for Human Rights Teaching at a ceremony at UNESCO Headquarters.
■ September: The Second United Nations Conference on the Least Developed Countries (LDCs) is held at UNESCO Headquarters.
■ The UNESCO Prize for Peace Education is awarded jointly to Mrs. Rigoberta Menchú Túm (Guatemala) for her work on behalf of her Indian compatriots and the rights of the indigenous populations of Latin America, and to the World Order Models Project, an association of researchers and intellectuals engaged in research, education and dialogue to promote an equitable world order.

Vaclav Havel receives the 1990 Simón Bolívar prize from the Director-General of UNESCO.

1991

General policy

■ 15 October-7 November: At UNESCO Headquarters, 2,000 delegates take part in the 26th session of the General Conference, which also coincides with the Organization's 45th anniversary. The Director-General states that the Conference "is much more than a fresh opportunity to gather together: it is a second birth. For the first time since 1946 a General Conference is being held in a climate of freedom and hope".
■ The General Conference adopts a budget for 1992-1993 that is $11,000,000, or 2.6%, less than that of the previous biennium. The Regular Budget for 1992-1993 is $444,700,000.
■ October-November: UNESCO's Constitution is amended, when the General Conference decides that, with effect from its next session, the Executive Board shall consist of States chosen from among the Organization's 163 Member States. It also calls on the Executive Board to "set up an ad hoc forum of reflection composed of a select number of eminent men and women in UNESCO's areas of competence from all the world's regions".
■ November: Mrs. Marie Bernard-Meunier, Ambassador and Permanent Delegate of Canada to UNESCO and a member of the Executive Board, is elected by the Board to serve as its Chairperson. This is the first time in UNESCO's history that a woman has occupied this office.
■ UNESCO has 163 Member States, 152 of which have established National Commissions. The most recent Member States are Lithuania (7 October), Latvia and Estonia (14 October) and Tuvalu, the former Ellice Islands (21 October).

Education

■ A number of meetings are convened at UNESCO's initiative, or in co-operation with UNESCO, on a wide range of issues including: education in Latin America and the Caribbean (PROMEDLAC IV, Quito, Ecuador, in April); education in Africa (a Ministerial Conference, MINEDAF VI, Dakar, Senegal, in July); the application of the Recommendation concerning the status of teachers, with ILO (UNESCO Headquarters, July); the International Network for Information in Science and Technology Education (INISTE), created in 1984 (Headquarters, July). A meeting between the deans and rectors of 60 African universities on university planning, administration and management is held in Accra (Ghana) in November, and the follow-up to the Jomtien Conference (the first meeting of the International Advisory Forum on Education for All) at Headquarters in December.

HIGHER EDUCATION: A UNESCO CHAIR IN CHILD DEVELOPMENT

■ September: As part of the UNITWIN Programme, a UNESCO Chair in nutrition, health and child development is established at the Kenyatta University in Nairobi. UNITWIN's objective is to encourage the twinning of higher education establishments and co-operation between them in training and research in higher education.
■ The General Conference amends the International Charter of Physical Education and Sport adopted in 1978 by introducing a new Article on the protection of ethical and moral values in this field.
■ June: In conjunction with the United Nations Drugs Control Programme (UNDCP), a ceremony is held to proclaim Anti-Drugs Day (16 June) and the United Nations Decade against Drug Abuse (1991-2000).

Exact and natural sciences

■ March: At UNESCO Headquarters, the 16th session of the Assembly of the IOC focuses on the Commission's programmes concerning ocean observation systems, tsunami warning systems, training in the marine sciences and related subjects.
■ March: The governing bodies of the MAB Programme approve the designation of two areas in Brazil, Vale de Ribeira Serra de Graciosa and Tijuca-Tinga-Orgaos, as biosphere reserves. This is the first time that Brazil has proposed that such areas on its territory be included in the international network of biosphere reserves.
■ May: The 10th anniversary of UNESCO's Coastal Marine Programme (COMAR) is marked by an international conference in Paris on "Coastal Systems Studies and Sustainable Development", organized by UNESCO and sponsored by the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) and the International Council of Scientific Unions (ICSU).
■ November: MAB's International Co-ordinating Council approves the programme on biological diversity being jointly carried out by the International Union of Biological Sciences (IUBS), the Scientific Committee on the Problems of the Environment (SCOPE) and UNESCO.

MOBILIZATION AGAINST AIDS

Social sciences

■ June: At a session held in Santander (Spain) the European Social Sciences Conference, organized by National Commissions for UNESCO, puts forward the idea of an "Inter-

governmental Programme in the Social and Human Sciences", and this is subsequently taken up by the General Conference.

■ July: At an inter-agency meeting on population activities held in New York a preparatory timetable is drawn up for an international training and research programme (1991-1995) financed by the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA).

■ 8 June: The "Venice Appeal" is launched to collect funds to help the African countries combat AIDS. Some thirty leading figures from the worlds of science, culture, business, and the media, along with dignitaries from different religious denominations, human rights activists and show business and sporting celebrities, join the Director-General in signing the Appeal, which bears the double imprint of UNESCO and the World Health Organization (WHO).

■ July: The signature of an agreement between UNESCO, the Council of Europe and the Portuguese Government is the signal for the launching of "Youth Links: North-South", a pilot project whose purpose is to foster closer North-South co-operation in connection with cultural exchanges between young people and to set up a network for co-ordinating governmental and non-governmental youth policies.

■ July-August: At the 16th meeting in Geneva of the Working Group on Contemporary Forms of Slavery, an organ of the United Nations Commission on Human Rights, UNESCO presents a report (the Pennstate Report) on the 1949 Convention for the Suppression of Traffic in Persons.

Culture

■ June: Senior officials of art institutions meet in St. Petersburg to discuss freedom of cultural and artistic exchange and approve the creation in the city of a Network for the promotion of international exchanges in the arts.

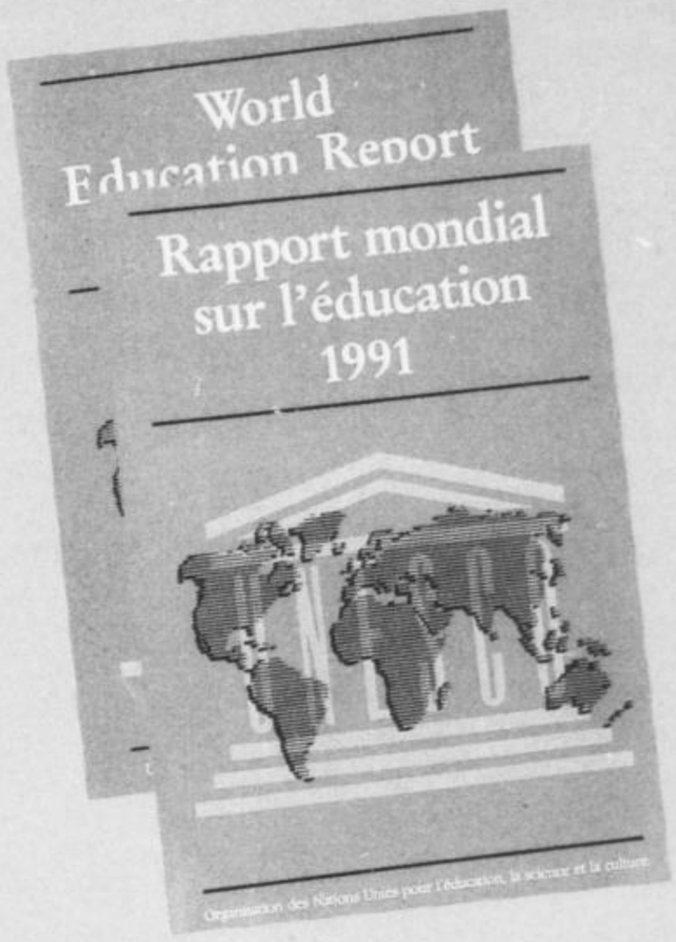
■ November-December: The Director-General visits Cambodia, where Prince Norodom Sihanouk, President of the Supreme National Council and Head of State, signs the instrument of acceptance of the World Heritage Convention (1972). At Angkor the Director-General addresses an appeal to the international community for the safeguarding of this magnificent site.

■ The General Conference adopts a Resolution requesting the Director-General to establish, in collaboration with the Secretary-General of the United Nations, an independent World Commission on Culture and Development.

■ The Draft Programme and Budget for 1992-1993 provides for the launching of activities, to be known as the Arabia Plan, to promote the Arab heritage and contemporary Arab culture by enlisting the support of scientific and cultural institutions in all regions.

Communication

■ April-May: For the first time in Africa, a seminar for the development of an independent and pluralist African press is held. It takes place in Windhoek (Namibia) under the auspices of UNESCO and the United Nations, in co-operation with the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) and in



consultation with various other institutions. Plans are made for activities and projects to promote the independence of the media and step up co-operation and exchanges between organs of the written press in the North and the South.

■ June: Some sixty Directors of Regional Communication Training Institutes, meeting at UNESCO Headquarters, draw up a strategy for communication training worldwide.

■ The German-funded PACJOURN project, providing for the training of journalists and the development of the written press in the Pacific Region, comes to an end. Over a three-year period, it has trained more than 300 journalists in the Region and has helped a number of newspapers to be equipped with computer-assisted production facilities.

■ September: UNESCO dispatches a mission to the library of the Academy of Sciences in St. Petersburg in connection with the restoration of the book collections damaged in the 1988 fire.

■ December: The first technical seminar takes place on the Pan-African Network for a Geological Information System (PANGIS), under which 15 national database centres were established in 1990-1991.

■ UNESCO's Office of Public Information (OPI) launches *Unescopress* to publish daily news about the Organization's activities.

Intersectoral activities

■ January: A formal agreement on the UNESCO-Chernobyl Programme, covering technical assistance in UNESCO's fields of competence and measures to alert international opinion, is signed with the three governments concerned.

■ April-June: A number of activities are undertaken in connection with UNESCO's Integral Study of the Silk Roads: Roads of Dialogue, including an expedition along the Steppes Route, the launching of a series of international research programmes on caravanserais and postal systems; epics along the Maritime Silk Route, languages and scripts, and other aspects; a fellowship programme; and initial preparations for a Silk Roads Festival to be held in 1993.

■ November: A meeting in connection with the "Amerindia '92" project, attended by representatives of American Indian groups, is held at the Museum of Civilizations in Ottawa-Hull (Canada) on the subject of "Developing in accordance with one's culture".

■ June-July: The mayors of forty-four historic cities protected by the World Heritage Convention meet in Quebec City (Canada) to discuss the management problems raised by the conservation of the cultural values for which their cities have been included on the World Heritage List and decide to create a network for collaboration between World Heritage cities.

■ 8-18 May: UNESCO dispatches a mission to Lebanon which recommends that priority be given to helping to save the National Museum of Beirut and restoring the country's educational facilities.

TEACHING COPYRIGHT THROUGH MIME

■ The first copyright training video-cassette produced by UNESCO is issued in five languages. In this case, however, priority goes to gesture rather than language, since the cassette features an explanation of copyright by the celebrated French mime Marcel Marceau.

Events

■ The bicentenary of Mozart's birth is celebrated at the Paris-Sorbonne University by a concert and gala evening and the award of UNESCO's Mozart medal to the soprano Elisabeth Schwarzkopf. In May, UNESCO pays tribute to Roger Caillois, one of the distinguished authors who have served as members of its staff.

■ Debates, lectures and seminars are held at Headquarters on a variety of themes, including: the contribution of Islamic civilization to European culture (May); ethics (with the Goethe Institut, Paris, June); religious toleration and world peace, with the participation of Hans Küng, (November); and "Science and tradition: interdisciplinary prospects" (December).

■ September: The UNESCO Peace Education Prize is awarded to Ruth Leger Sivard of the United States for her work in favour of disarmament, and to the Cours Sainte-Marie de Hann, one of UNESCO's Associated Schools. October, the Sultan Qaboos Prize for Environmental Preservation, awarded for the first time, goes to the Instituto de Ecología (Mexico).

■ November-December: The Fourth World AIDS Day is held at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris on the theme "Sharing the Challenge".

■ 6 December: The Director-General makes public a telegram to the Yugoslav Secretary of Defence in which he states that he has "learned with consternation and outrage" of the shelling of Dubrovnik and goes on to say: "Your attention is called to the specific commitment you and the federal authorities have entered into to respect and protect the world cultural heritage, in accordance with the international conventions to which Yugoslavia is a signatory". Since 28 November, two permanent UNESCO observers have been posted in Dubrovnik to record any damage caused to the historic centre of the city and to report daily on the situation to the Director-General. ❐

UNESCO IN ACTION

UNESCO and the fifth centenary

UNESCO is commemorating 1492 with two projects:

Amerindia 92 seeks to create opportunities for reflection and dialogue with the indigenous peoples of America, with a view to establishing new forms of intercultural relationships. Two meetings have already been held in Ottawa (Canada, November 1991) and in San Cristóbal de las Casas (Mexico, June 1991), and others are scheduled to take place in Oaxaca (Mexico, September 1992), in the Caribbean countries and in South America. An Amerindian film festival will be held in June at UNESCO Headquarters in Paris, and will be followed by an exhibition of photographs, concerts featuring Latin American music, and a series of lectures.

A Series of Encounters is a project designed to illustrate the universal scope and richness of the exchanges between the cultures of the indigenous peoples of the continent and islands, of the Europeans and of the Africans and Asians from whose fusion new nations emerged. On 8 May UNESCO is sponsoring a literary competition on the theme of "extraordinary travellers" at the St. Malo (France) Book Festival. In the same month a symposium is being held under UNESCO's auspices at Praia (Cape Verde) on "The Encounter between Two Worlds: the African contribution and its repercussions".

These activities and many more—publications, seminars and cultural events—are all designed to encourage the widest possible participation in the commemoration of an event which profoundly marked the course of human history. They are also intended to give a new picture of the possibilities of cultural pluralism and cross-fertilization, and to show the contribution that America has made and continues to make to the rest of the world. ❐

UNESCO at EXPO 92

One hundred and ten countries and hundreds of artists from all over the world are participating in EXPO 92, the World Fair which opened at Seville, Spain, on 20 April. It is estimated that eighteen million people will have visited the Fair before the gates close for the last time, on 12 October. In the year of the five hundredth anniversary of the first encounter between Europe and America, EXPO 92 has taken as its theme the Age of Discovery and provides a fascinating panorama of the evolution of human knowledge. UNESCO has co-ordinated the participation of the entire United Nations system in this event.

Built thanks to the sponsorship of the Bank of Bilbao Vizcaya and of the Spanish authorities, the United Nations pavilion has been allotted an attractive site beside an artificial lake. Designed by the Spanish architect José Ramón Rodríguez Gautier, the thousand-metre-square building takes the form of a cube of glass and concrete, representing humanity, within a double-structured metal quarter of a sphere symbolizing the universe.

Some six hundred visitors an hour will make their way through a series of rooms where information panels outline activities of the thirty-seven specialized agencies of the United Nations family. Then follows, on a succession of video screens, a film featuring a cartoon of an extraterrestrial creature who arrives by chance on our planet and is first pleased by its natural beauty and then horrified by the misery caused by pollution, war and disease. Finally the creature sees an answer to the problem in the form of international solidarity, expressed notably in the action of the United Nations. The motto of the United Nations pavilion is "Creating a Better World". ❐

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Tolerance

OSCAR NIEMEYER

1492 and afterwards:

museum

N°1, 1992

This issue of Unesco's international quarterly review of information and reflection on museums focuses on migrations to Latin America and the museums that reflect cultural diversity there: Afro-Cuban traditions, Japanese immigrants in Peru, the Jewish population of Buenos Aires, the Germans in southern Brazil, a "Viking" in Ecuador. Movements outward from Latin America are also explored: Nicaraguan paintings in Denmark, Chilean art in Stockholm and pre-Columbian inspiration in the works of Joan Miró.

Copies of the "1492" number of ***Museum*** *in English may be obtained at the price of US$10 from Blackwell Publishers, 108 Cowley Road, Oxford OX4 1JF, UK, or 3 Cambridge Centre, Cambridge MA, 02412, USA. Copies in Arabic, French, Russian or Spanish may be obtained for 54 French francs (or equivalent in convertible currency) from* ***Museum****, CLT/CH, Unesco, 1 rue Miollis, 75015 Paris, France. (Cheques should be made out to Unesco with your name and address clearly printed as well as the language version you wish to receive.)*

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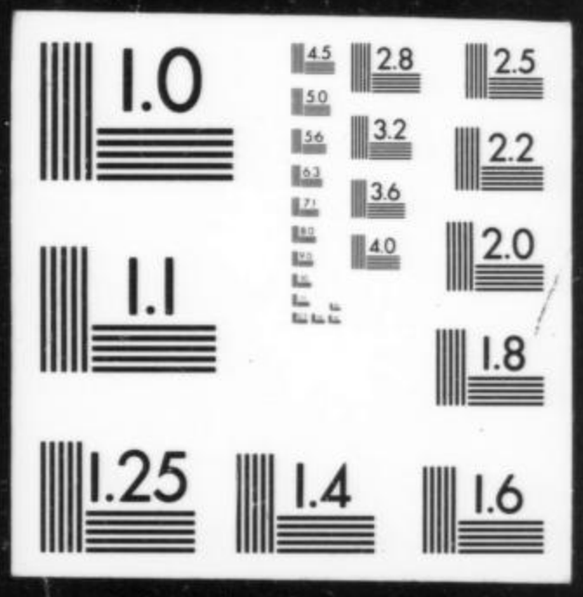
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